Study Unit

Sentence Skills

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Preview

Hockey teams can execute plays with effectiveness and precision only if the players are thoroughly familiar with the rules of the game. Likewise, an announcer can describe the action in a fluent, coherent manner only if the announcer understands the rules and the fundamental patterns of hockey and of effective expression.

This ability to speak fluently and coherently is a priceless asset. Yet, it can be acquired by anyone who masters the basic rules and patterns of the "game" of effective communication. In speech, these rules and patterns, known as *grammar*, are important. You've learned a lot about grammar so far, and in this study unit, you'll learn more. And, as you do so, you'll continue to develop skills in conversation, vocabulary, usage, pronunciation, spelling, reading comprehension, and writing.

When you complete this study unit, you'll be able to

- Recognize and use the various elements of sentence structure
- Distinguish independent clauses from dependent clauses
- Correct common writing mistakes
- Punctuate sentences to convey meaning
- Write sentences that have effective beginnings, concise wording, parallel structure, and active voice

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Sentence Skills

WHAT A SENTENCE IS

To make a statement or to ask a question, a sentence must have a *subject* and a *predicate*. Thoroughly understanding subjects and predicates is the secret to knowing what a sentence is. So let's review, briefly.

Subjects and Predicates

The part of the sentence that names the person, place, or thing about which a statement is made is the *subject*. The one noun or pronoun that names the subject is called the *simple subject*. If the noun or pronoun is described by other words, then the entire group is known as the *complete subject*. To find the simple subject of a sentence, identify the main verb. When you've found it, ask yourself *who* or *what* performed the action of the verb. The answer will be the subject.

Musicians in uniform stood at attention on the field.

Remember, a verb expresses action or a state of being. In this sentence, the main verb is *stood*. We ask, "Who stood?" The answer is *musicians*—the simple subject. The word *musicians* is modified by the prepositional phrase *in uniform*. The complete subject of the sentence is *musicians in uniform* (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1—The complete subject of our example sentence is "musicians in uniform."

Finding the *complete predicate* of a sentence is also simple. It's all of the sentence except the complete subject. In the sentence just considered, the complete predicate is *stood at attention on the field.* The main verb is called the *simple predicate.* In our sentence, *stood* is the simple predicate.

Finding the subjects and predicates of simple sentences can be done in five steps. Consider the following sentence:

> The student with the white shirt reads beside the steps.

1. Locate the simple predicate (*reads*).
2. Ask a question consisting of *who* (or *what*) followed by the simple predicate ("Who reads?").
3. Answer the question with one noun or pronoun. The answer is the simple subject—*student* (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2—In our example sentence, "student" does the action and is the simple subject.

4. Find the complete subject. Add all the modifiers to the simple subject (*The student with the white shirt*).
5. Remove the complete subject. That leaves the complete predicate (*reads beside the steps*).

English in Action 1

To review your understanding of subjects and predicates, circle the *simple subject* and the *simple predicate* in each sentence below.

1. George Washington was over six feet tall.
2. The Potomac River is very wide.
3. George Washington could never have thrown a silver dollar across the Potomac River.
4. He suffered from constant dental problems.
5. His wooden teeth are displayed at the museum at Mount Vernon.
6. Another famous Founding Father was Benjamin Franklin.
7. Writer, publisher, inventor, statesman, and colonial agent were just a few of Franklin's vocations and avocations.
8. Benjamin Franklin was an interesting colonial American.

Check your answers with those on page 75.

Sentence Patterns

Words in English are put together in certain orders. In fact, the way words are put together in relation to each other is the primary way we communicate meaning in English. Look at the group of words below.

turtle the a raced rabbit

Do they make sense? No, of course not—not in the order presented. However, you can easily rearrange them so that they do make sense, so that they are grammatical. Try it now. Here are the possibilities that you could invent:

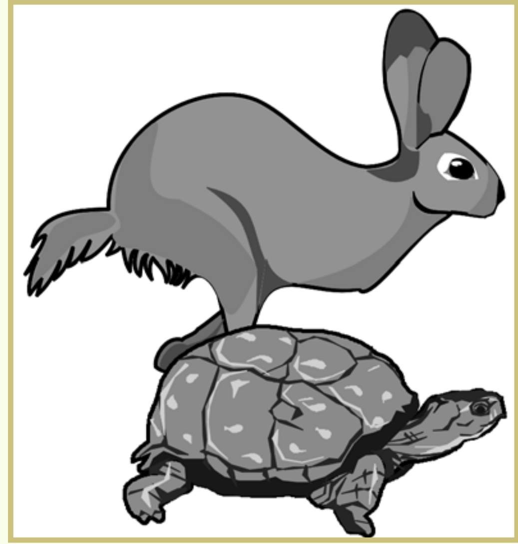
The turtle raced a rabbit.

The rabbit raced a turtle.

A turtle raced the rabbit.

A rabbit raced the turtle.

You have several ways to say that the turtle and rabbit are racing.



How did you know to arrange the words in these four ways? Because, having used English, you already understand how words are put together so that they make sense. There are several ways English words are usually ordered to communicate meaning. For instance, the pattern illustrated in the sentences we've just mentioned is called subject, action verb, direct object pattern. It is one of the most common patterns. In Figure 3, you'll see this pattern listed as Pattern 2.

FIGURE 3—The Primary English Sentence Patterns for Stating or Implying Something

1.	**Subject**	**Verb**		
	The dog	barked.		
	She	is shopping.		
	The gymnasts	have been performing.		
2.	**Subject**	**Action Verb**	**Direct Object**	
	Mary Lou	baked	a cake.	
	Uncle Harry	was asking	a question.	
	The teacher	corrected	the tests.	
3.	**Subject**	**Action Verb**	**Indirect Object**	**Direct Object**
	The secretary	handed	him	a letter.
	Sam	gave	Mrs. Rivera	his test.
	Luis	sang	the class	a song.
4.	**Subject**	**Linking Verb**	**Subject Complement**	
	The glasses	were	dirty.	
	That woman	is	my godmother.	
	The tiger	appears	hungry.	
5.	**Subject**	**Verb**	**Object**	**Object Complement**
	We	named	our dog	Sam.
	The pot	called	the kettle	black.

Along with the basic patterns for stating or implying something, Figure 4 shows that there are also three commonly used question patterns.

FIGURE 4—The Primary English Sentence Patterns for Asking Questions

1.	**Helping Verb**	**Subject**	**Main Verb**
	Do	you	hike?
	Have	we	arrived?
2.	**Adverb**	**Verb**	**Subject**
	Where	are	my glasses?
	When	is	the festival?
3.	**Adjective/ Pronoun**	**Subject**	**Interrogative Verb**
	What	creature	sings?
	Which	cup	leaks?
	Which	runner	won?

Practice Exercise 1

At the end of each section of *Sentence Skills,* you'll be asked to check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "Practice Exercise." Writing the answers to these questions will help you review what you've learned so far. Please complete *Practice Exercise 1* now.

Questions 1–10: In each of the following sentences, underline the *simple predicate* twice and the *simple subject* once. Then circle the *complete subject* in each sentence. (The remaining words belong to the complete predicate.)

1. Sam entered the check in the wrong customer account.
2. Rose's lost briefcase contained the only copy of the proposal.
3. Technical writing is a useful skill in some jobs.
4. Job pressures make it difficult to maintain personal friendships.
5. Company benefit packages are frequently misunderstood.
6. Fax machines make instant written communication possible.
7. Long business trips are expensive and tiring.
8. Office automation changed many jobs.
9. More people dress casually for work today than in the past.
10. Many employers restrict smoking to certain areas.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 1

Questions 11–18: Identify the patterns of each of the following sentences. The first one is done as an example.

11. Where are the beautiful yellow roses? adverb verb subject
12. The spring flowers are beautiful. ____________
13. What is the reason for your lateness? ____________
14. Grandmother baked a rhubarb pie. ____________
15. Have you seen the intersection where the accident took place? ____________
16. That novel by Fitzgerald is my favorite. ____________
17. The farmer gave his chickens some cracked corn. ____________
18. Sylvia called her sister's boyfriend an idiot. ____________

Check your answers with those on page 77.

PHRASES AND CLAUSES

Words, as you know, are the building blocks of our language. Often, individual words are put together into groups or units that work together like a single word. The words can, for example, function together as a noun.

- If the group of related words has a subject and verb, it's called a *clause.*
- If the group of related words does not have a subject and verb, it's called a *phrase.*

The most common kinds of phrases are prepositional phrases and verbal phrases.

Prepositional Phrases

A *prepositional phrase* is a group of related words that acts as either an adjective or an adverb in a sentence. A prepositional phrase is made up of at least two words: a preposition (a linking word) and a noun or pronoun (called the object of the preposition).

from him

off the *wall*

inside his *head*

across an open *road*

on the bouncing *bed*

into a cold, dark *night*

Notice that in most of the examples the phrase contains more words than just a preposition and an object. You can find words between a preposition and its object. Since the object must be a noun or pronoun, the object can have articles (*a, an,* and *the*), adjectives (*bouncing, cold,* and *dark*), or possessive pronouns (*his*) along with it.

Remember, a prepositional phrase always begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun. It may also have some other related words between the preposition and the noun or pronoun. Knowing what words commonly function as prepositions can help you pick out prepositional phrases. Figure 5 shows a list of words commonly used as prepositions.

PREPOSITIONS			
about	near	along	out of
behind	to	by	up
in	after	onto	at
since	between	under	for
above	off	among	over
below	toward	down	with
into	against	out	before
through	beyond	until	from
across	on	around	past
beside	towards	during	without

FIGURE 5—Some Common Prepositions

Earlier, we said prepositional phrases act as either adjectives or adverbs in sentences. Recall that an adjective describes a noun or pronoun, while an adverb describes a verb, adjective, or adverb. Look at the following prepositional phrases:

The man fell *from the roof.*

Where did he fall from? The phrase is used as an adverb. It answers a question adverbs answer.

The boy *with the red hat* is Ray's brother.

Which boy is Ray's brother? The phrase describes the noun *boy*. It's used as an adjective.

She walked *with a limp.*

How did she walk? The phrase is used as an adverb.

The man *in the brand-new sedan* is an insurance salesperson.

Which man is an insurance salesperson? The phrase is used as an adjective.

Verbal Phrases

One of the special features of the English language is its versatility. Words can be used in a variety of ways. For instance, a word like *light* can function as a noun (The light is on), a verb (Light my fire), an adjective (He is light in weight), and an adverb (His eyes are light blue).

Another way that we see this versatility is with verb forms. Parts of verbs, like the present participle form (the *ing* form) can be used as part of a main verb in a sentence. However, they can also be used in other ways. Present participles can also be used as nouns or adjectives. For instance,

The fox was *running* through the snow. (main verb)

The fox *running* through the snow seemed nimble. (adjective)

Running through the snow gives the fox exercise. (noun)

Correctly used verbal phrases can create striking images in a reader's mind.

When parts of verbs are used in a way other than as a main verb, they are called *verbals.* As verbals, they keep many of their verb qualities. They can have objects and adverbs.

Having won the race by a nose, the jockey yelled in victory.

Race is the direct object of the verbal *having won. By a nose* is a prepositional phrase that's used as the verbal's adverb.

Gerund Phrases

A *gerund* is a verb form that's used as a noun. Gerunds always end in *ing* and function as nouns. A gerund can be a subject, a subject complement, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition. A gerund can appear by itself, as in

I enjoy *dancing.*

Or, it can introduce a phrase.

Flying a kite is fun.

The entire gerund phrase, *flying a kite*, functions as subject of the sentence.

I'm good at *making clay pots.*

The gerund phrase, *making clay pots*, is the object of the preposition *at.*

Seeing is *believing.*

Both *seeing* and *believing* are gerunds. *Seeing* is the subject and *believing* is the subject complement.

An important point to keep in mind is that an *ing* form of a verb can't be used by itself as a main verb. It must have a helping verb with it, like a form of the verb *to be.* Look at the following words:

Driving on the highway.

Driving can't be a main verb because it doesn't have a helper like *is* or *was* with it. This word group is a phrase. Because it starts it with a capital letter and ends it with a period, it's an incomplete sentence—a fragment. It's only a piece of a main clause. It doesn't contain a subject and a predicate.

Now, let's add a subject and a helping verb to the *ing* phrase.

The man is driving on the highway.

The *ing* form is now part of a main verb, whose subject is *man.*

We can also use that *ing* form as a noun, which will make it a gerund.

Driving on the highway is how we'll get there quickly.

Here, the phrase *driving on the highway* is a gerund phrase. It's the subject of the verb *is.*

> He enjoyed driving on the highway during his vacation.

The phrase *driving on the highway during his vacation* is a gerund phrase. It's used as the object of the verb *enjoyed.* Remember, a gerund can be used any way a noun can be used. A sentence with a gerund or gerund phrase must have a complete verb that doesn't include the gerund. The gerund itself can't be part of that verb.

Participial Phrases

Participial phrases are used as adjectives. We've just seen that the *ing* form of the verb can be used as a noun called a gerund. The *ing* form can also be used as an adjective. Unlike the gerund, which is used only in the present *ing* form, a participle may be used in the past form. The past participle is the form of the verb used with *has, have,* or *had.* Often the past participle, as the past tense, ends in *ed,* but there are irregular past participles too. Here are some common ways that participles end:

1. Forms ending in *ing*, as *walking, singing, looking*

   Looking over her report, Marie found several mistakes.

2. Forms that end in *ed*, as *oiled, completed, boiled, loved*

   We collected the *completed* forms from the members.

3. Forms that end in *en*, as *written, woven, frozen, hidden*

   Frozen all the way through, the turkey took all day to thaw.

4. Forms that end in *n*, as *known, shown, grown, sworn*

   We discarded the *torn* garment.

5. Forms that end in *d* or *t*, as *told, heard, bought, burst*

   Sometimes a twice-*told* tale is boring.

Some people might mistake *looking* for a gerund because it ends in *ing.* As always, the key to identifying the part of speech correctly is to pinpoint how the word, phrase, or clause functions in the sentence.

The fact that participles are verb forms allows you to add details that have motion or action to a noun or pronoun—something you can't do with other kinds of adjectives.

> The running water in the toilet raised our water bill.
>
> Tossing and turning all night, the woman had a fitful sleep.

When you read the above sentences, you get a sense of motion from *running* and *tossing and turning.* An advantage of using participles is that they add action to your writing.

Another advantage of the participle structure is that you can use it to vary the beginning of sentences. If you find yourself writing too many subject-verb sentences, try to combine some with participles.

> *Dull:* The trumpet player made his way through the crowd. He was pushed and shoved.
>
> *Better:* Pushed and shoved, the trumpet player made his way through the crowd.

Be careful, though. It's easy with sentences such as this to create what's called a *dangling modifier.* Look at the following sentence:

> Turning the key, the engine started.

Because it's right before the noun *engine,* the phrase *turning the key* appears to be a participle describing *engine*. But that doesn't make much sense, does it? The engine isn't turning the key. Now, to correct this dangling modifier, think of someone who could turn the key. Then put that word right after the participial phrase.

> Turning the key, John got the engine to start.

Another way to correct this error is to expand the participial phrase into a clause:

> If you turn the key, the engine will start.
>
> When John turned the key, the engine started.

Should You Use the Possessive?

What do you do when a noun or pronoun is followed by an *ing* form? Should the noun or pronoun be possessive? The answer to that question is going to boil down to whether the *ing* form is a gerund or a participle. To elaborate, let's look at two possibilities.

> I don't like that man looking at me.
>
> I don't like that man's looking at me.

How do we determine which form of a noun or pronoun to use before such verbals? The two sentences convey different ideas. "I don't like that man looking at me" means that I dislike the man. The phrase *looking at me,* in that sentence, functions as an adjective modifying *man.* "I don't like that man's looking at me" means that I dislike the man's act only, not the man himself. Here, *looking at me* functions as a noun.

Is It a Participle, Gerund, or Main Verb?

He was *looking* for his friend at the airport.

Looking for his friend at the airport took a long time.

Looking for his friend at the airport, he didn't notice the security guard approaching him.

As you can see, each of these sentences uses *looking,* but each uses it in a different way.

In the first sentence, *looking* is used with *was* to form the main verb of the sentence. (Recall that an *ing* form of a verb needs a helping verb to be used as a main verb.)

In the second sentence, the phrase *looking for his friend at the airport* tells what took a long time. Therefore, it's the subject of the sentence and is a gerund, a verbal noun. In the third sentence *looking for his friend at the airport* describes *he.* Anything that describes a noun or pronoun is an adjective. The verbal phrase here is a participle.

Now, let's look at two more sentences.

Kevin finally completed his work.

Having completed his work, Kevin took a break.

Notice that we only gave you two options this time. That's because a gerund can't be a past form of the verb; it's used only in the *ing* form. However, notice that *completed* in the first sentence is a main verb with *Kevin* as its subject. *Completed* in the second sentence is part of the participial phrase describing *Kevin.*

Remember, the key to determining whether a word is a main verb, a gerund, or a participle is to decide how the word is being used in a sentence.

Infinitive Phrases

An *infinitive* is a form of a verb with *to.* For example,

They'll try *to go.*

He likes *to sleep.*

I want *to run.*

The infinitive is the most versatile verb form in the English language. Along with its use as a verb, the infinitive can serve also as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

The *to* is omitted, however, when the infinitive follows the prepositions *but* and *except*. It's also often omitted after such verbs as *bid, dare, feel, hear, let, make, need*, and *see*.

She does nothing but *sit* all day.

I felt the house *shake* from the storm.

Did you hear him *sing*?

The infinitive is often used as a noun. Like other nouns, it may serve as a subject, an object, or a predicate noun.

Subject: *To succeed* is his ambition.

Object: I want *to succeed.*

Complement: His ambition is *to succeed.*

An infinitive is used as an adjective when it modifies a noun or a pronoun.

Ed is the one *to help.* (Adjective modifying the pronoun *one*)

An infinitive serves as an adverb when it modifies an adjective, a verb, or an adverb.

This machine is simple *to operate.* (Adverb modifying the adjective *simple*)

She ran *to keep* in shape. (Adverb modifying the verb *ran.*)

Split Infinitive

Formerly, careful speakers and writers observed the rule that *to* should never be separated from the verb. They would never say, for example,

I asked you *to* merely *trim* the grass, not to obliterate it.

The insertion of *merely* splits the infinitive *to trim.*

It's now acceptable to split an infinitive if sound, emphasis, or meaning justifies it. However, we could improve many sentences containing split infinitives if we placed the modifier elsewhere.

Less effective: I want you *to* promptly *mail* the announcement.

More effective: I want you *to mail* the announcement promptly.

Subject of the Infinitive

As you know, the subject of a verb must be in the nominative case. The only exception is this: *A noun or pronoun that is the subject of an infinitive must be in the objective case.* Consider the following sentence:

> You want me to apologize?

The main verb in this sentence is *want.* Many people would mistakenly assume that its object is *me.* To find the object, we ask: "What do you want?" At once we see that the answer is the entire phrase *me to apologize. Me* is therefore the subject of the infinitive *to apologize.*

If the subject of an infinitive must always be in the objective case, then the object form of a pronoun (or a noun) must be used on both sides of the infinitive *to be.*

> I thought *her* to be *you.*
>
> Did he take *them* to be *us*?

Preposition or Infinitive?

Don't make the mistake of thinking that every *to* introduces an infinitive. The word *to* may introduce a prepositional phrase, in which case it will be followed by an object. To identify a prepositional phrase, then, look for a noun or pronoun (and its modifiers) directly after the *to*—*to a distant city, to a college, to outer space, to you and me.* The word *to* is the sign of an infinitive only when it precedes a verb.

English in Action 2

Indicate whether the italicized verbal phrase in each of the following sentences is a *gerund, participial,* or *infinitive phrase.*

1. *Teaching young children* requires both skill and patience.______________________________
2. I enjoy *reading historical novels.* ______________________________
3. *To be accepted by that college* was my chief ambition.______________________________
4. *Going to work this morning,* I saw an accident occur.______________________________
5. The fruit was left *to ripen on the tree.*______________________________
6. *Pushing like mad,* we finally opened the door. ______________________________

Check your answers with those on page 75.

Dependent Clauses

We've examined three kinds of verbal phrases: infinitive phrases, gerund phrases, and participial phrases. A phrase, you'll recall, is a group of two or more related words that work together but don't contain a subject and predicate. In this section, we'll examine three kinds of clauses—groups of words with a subject and a predicate. Specifically, we'll be looking at dependent clauses, ones that are used as adverbs, adjectives, or nouns.

Before we talk about each of these clauses, though, let's focus on the meaning of a dependent clause. If you have children, you know that they lean on you for all sorts of things—shelter, food, love, guidance. They can't completely provide for their support on their own; they need you. The same is true for dependent clauses. They need an independent clause to lean on for support. Dependent clauses in English function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

Note: We'll refer to these clauses as *dependent,* but you should know that these clauses are also called *subordinate* clauses. The word *subordinate* means "ranked under," so a subordinate clause is one of lesser rank than an independent (main) clause. In other words, it's dependent.

Adverbial Clauses

The only difference between an independent clause and an adverbial clause is that the adverbial clause begins with what's called a *subordinate conjunction.*

> The bus stops here.

This is an independent clause. It can stand on its own. But what happens if you put a word like *although, if,* or *when* in front of the clause?

> Although the bus stops here.
>
> If the bus stops here.
>
> When the bus stops here.

See what has happened? That one word makes a big difference. If you read any of the above clauses, you'd want more information, wouldn't you? You'd want to know what happens *although* or *if* or *when* the bus stops here.

These groups of words, though still clauses, are no longer independent ones. They don't express a complete thought. They're dependent and need to be attached to an independent clause.

Although the bus stops here, it is always late.

If the bus stops here, I'll get on it.

When the bus stops here, a crossing guard directs traffic.

These particular dependent clauses are adverbs. Can you see why? Each, though a whole clause, answers a question an adverb answers: Under what condition? When?

Since every adverbial clause begins with a subordinate conjunction, familiarizing yourself with words commonly used as subordinate conjunctions will help you recognize adverbial clauses.

Subordinate conjunctions fall into five groups:

1. Time

   after, before, since, until, till, when, as long as, as soon as

2. Reason or cause

   as, because, since

3. Contingency or supposition

   although, if, unless, provided, whether

4. Purpose or result

   lest, so that, in order that

5. Comparison

   as, if, as though (also *than* when it follows *other, rather*, or an adjective in the comparative degree, as in *better than this*)

The placement of a subordinate conjunction before one clause or the other can shift meaning and focus. Consider the following examples:

Although John is always late, he is an efficient worker.

Although he is an efficient worker, John is always late.

If you were John and had to have one of these sentences on your annual evaluation, would you have a preference? If you were wise, you'd select the first option. The reason? In sentences like this, with an independent and a dependent clause, the emphasis in on the independent clause. The first sentence emphasizes John's efficiency, while the second one emphasizes his lateness. The only difference in these two sentences, however, is the word order.

Adjectival Clauses

An adjectival clause describes a noun or pronoun and answers questions such as Which one? What kind? What sort of?

Relative Pronouns

An adjectival clause follows the word it modifies. It also contains a relative pronoun. The common relative pronouns are *who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose, which,* and *that.* Adjectival clauses are also called *relative clauses.*

> My mother, *who had tears streaming down her face,* was making onion soup. (This adjectival clause modifies the noun *mother.*)
>
> The store was sold out of the toy *that the child wanted.* (The adjectival clause describes the noun *toy.*)
>
> Air *that is polluted* is bad for you. (The adjectival clause modifies the noun *air.*)
>
> The man *to whom he gave the package* was a federal agent. (The adjectival clause describes the noun *man.*)

In most adjectival clauses, the relative pronoun begins the clause (although that's not the case in the last example). Unlike the subordinate conjunction, which introduces adverbial clauses, the relative pronoun plays an important role in the adjectival clause. Often, a relative pronoun is being used as a subject, direct object, or object of a preposition. In the first example, notice that *who* is the subject of the verb *had. That* is the subject of *is polluted* in the third sentence. In the second sentence, *that* is the direct object. In the last sentence, *whom* is object of the preposition *to.*

Another consideration with adjectival clauses is which relative word to use.

Who, whoever, whom, whomever, and *whose* are used for people (*Who* is the subject form and *whom* is the object form. *Whose* is possessive.)

> All the people who were injured in the accident were taken to the hospital. (*Who* is subject of the verb *were injured.*)
>
> The person for whom he had the greatest respect is his father. (*Whom* is object of the preposition *for.*)
>
> John, whose greatest accomplishment was scoring the winning touchdown in the team's final game, was honored by the fans. (*Whose* is the possessive pronoun.)

Which is used for things, animals, ideas, and groups of people not considered as individuals.

The whale, which lives in water, is a mammal.

Freedom of speech, which is a basic right of free people, is vital to a true democracy.

The special committee, which the president had selected, completed its work.

That is the relative with the broadest use. It can be used for people, places, things, and ideas.

A friend that can be trusted is a precious gift.

The thought that he could someday become president crossed his mind.

Restrictive or Nonrestrictive?

Did you notice that in some of our examples the adjectival clause is set off in commas but in others it isn't? Whether the clause is set off in commas has to do with whether the clause is restricting or limiting the meaning of the noun or pronoun the clause describes. To illustrate, let's look at two sentences.

A person who lives in a glass house shouldn't throw stones.

Mr. George G. Wagner, who lives in a glass house, shouldn't throw stones.

Can you see why the *who* clause is set off in commas in the second sentence but not the first? Try removing the clause from both sentences.

A person shouldn't throw stones.

Mr. George G. Wagner shouldn't throw stones.

In which sentence do you still know what particular person shouldn't throw stones? That's right: the second one. But what about the first? Since *a* refers to any person, without the adjectival clause the sentence says that no person should throw stones. That might be a good idea, but the removal of the adjectival clause has changed the meaning of the noun *person.* The clause was restricting the kind of person who shouldn't throw stones to a particular type: someone who lives in a glass house. Restrictive clauses like this can't be removed without significantly changing the scope of the noun and the meaning of the sentence.

A clause is usually restrictive if it's following a general noun that doesn't have any other limiting adjectives with it. Clauses following proper nouns—names of specific persons, places, or things—are usually nonrestrictive. They are simply adding additional information to the noun or pronoun and the sentence.

So, you might be asking, what about those commas? Look again at our examples and you'll see that a restrictive clause isn't set off in commas. A nonrestrictive clause is set off with commas.

Keep in mind what we said about the meaning of these two kinds of clauses. If a clause is restrictive, it's essential to the meaning of the noun or pronoun. Therefore, it's not set off in commas. If the clause is simply adding additional information, as in nonrestrictive clauses, it is set off in commas.

If you're not sure whether a clause needs to be set off, you can think of the commas as handles that allow you to lift out the clause without disturbing the essential meaning of the noun or the sentence.

And, don't forget the second comma needed to set off a nonrestrictive clause that comes in the middle of a sentence. It's easy to forget that second comma, especially if the nonrestrictive clause is relatively long.

> *Incorrect:* Mr. Murray, who was president of his own insurance company was a millionaire.

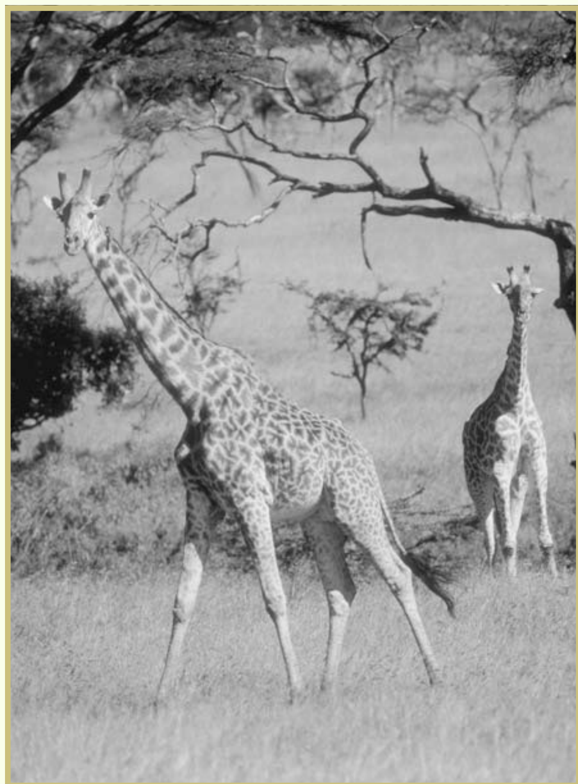
> *Correct:* Mr. Murray, who was president of his own insurance company, was a millionaire.

The relative pronouns *which* and *that* can both be used for places, things, and ideas. Careful writers use *that* with restrictive clauses and *which* with nonrestrictive clauses.

> The giraffe, which is the tallest mammal, lives in Africa.

> The mammal that is the tallest is the giraffe.

Relative pronouns can help to describe important information about a subject.



Noun Clauses

A *noun clause* is a dependent clause used as a noun. Any way that a single noun can be used, a noun clause can be too. The most common signal words for noun clauses are *that, what, whatever, who, whoever, whom*, and *whomever*. Other signal words for noun clauses include *how, if, that, where, wherever, whether, which, whichever*, and *why*.

My mother admitted *that she was depressed.* (The noun clause is used here as a direct object. It answers the question *what.*)

What you need is a vacation. (The noun clause serves as the subject of the verb *is.*)

Give the gift to *whoever answers the door.* (The noun clause is the object of the preposition *to.*)

Tell *whomever* you meet the truth. (The noun clause is the indirect object of the verb *tell.*)

Wherever he goes is where I want to be.

Here's *how the dishwasher operates.*

To see that noun clauses are simply clauses used as nouns, let's replace some single nouns with noun clauses.

Jim's failure amazes me.

That Jim failed amazes me.

Everyone here knows *your good news.*

Everyone here knows *that you were promoted.*

Tell me more about *it.*

Tell me more about *what you want me to do.*

To say what you mean, you must sometimes use a group of words rather than a single word. If that group of words has a subject and predicate, it's a clause, and if it's being used in the way a single noun would be used, it's a noun clause.

Practice Exercise 2

Questions 1–6: Test your knowledge of *relative pronouns* by circling the correct form in each of the following sentences.

1. All of the zoo animals *who/that* were indoors were fed by four o'clock.
2. The March Hare, *who/which* appears in the next chapter, is quite eccentric.
3. The French soldiers, *who/that* arrived after dark, went without supper.
4. Lee is the accountant *who/whom* I met at the office.
5. Grace will interview *whoever/whomever* comes first.
6. I am reading a biography of Napoleon, *that/which* is a remarkable book.

Questions 7–12: Indicate whether each of the italicized words in the following sentences is used as a *participle* or as the *main verb* of the sentence. List the participles in the first column; list the main verbs in the second column. Remember that a participle standing alone can't be the main verb of a sentence.

	Sentence	Participles	Main Verbs
7.	The dog *is tugging* at the chain *fastened* to the pole.		
8.	His *walking* shoes are still good as new.		
9.	The *hanging* plant is a philodendron.		
10.	I don't think we'll be able to mend the *broken* dish.		
11.	When *was* the pink vase *broken?*		
12.	*Will* your friend *be painting* all afternoon?		

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 2

	Sentence	Participles	Main Verbs
13.	The *written* word lasts longer than the *spoken* word.		
14.	You *should have worn* your hat in such *freezing* weather.		
15.	Many *retired* people *are working* at hobbies.		
16.	This novel, *written* by James Baldwin, challenges one's convictions.		

Questions 17–23: Underline the *participial phrase* in each sentence.

17. The boys, having finished their dinner, rushed to the baseball field.
18. Told of a possible flu epidemic, the employees signed up to be inoculated.
19. The girls were frightened at the strange noises coming from the old house.
20. I see a thread hanging from your shirt.
21. The letter, written in black ink on white paper, was easy to read.
22. The audience was delighted with the music played by the stage band.
23. Trembling with emotion, he walked slowly to the platform.

Questions 24–28: Underline the *gerund* or *gerund phrase* in the following sentences. Remember that the gerunds and gerund phrases are used as nouns.

24. Racing is a popular amusement.
25. Collecting coins has proved to be a profitable hobby for many people.
26. My mother's favorite exercise is digging in the garden.
27. By hooking the cars together, we pulled them out of the mud.
28. Exercising daily keeps your body in good tone.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 2

Questions 29–38: Some of the following sentences contain *infinitives.* Some do not. Write the infinitives you find. If there's no infinitive in the sentence, write *no infinitive.*

29. I want to drive a Volkswagen. ______
30. My friends have offered to help me with the driving. ______
31. We hope the trip to Canada will be pleasant. ______
32. To be there by the end of the month is our goal. ______
33. As you know, a trip to Niagara Falls is part of our plans. ______
34. Without a doubt, to travel helps in broadening a person's experience. ______
35. The travel agent had to talk with Bill. ______
36. If our plans must be changed, we'll go to Atlantic City. ______
37. To swim in salt water would be a pleasant experience. ______
38. Whatever happens, we intend to do some traveling. ______

Questions 39–48: Underline the *dependent clause* in each sentence. Indicate whether the clause is an *adjectival clause* or an *adverbial clause.*

39. The package arrived while you were telephoning. ______
40. Jim read the newspaper that Joe bought. ______
41. The crowd became quiet when he raised his hands. ______
42. The squirrel that bit her didn't have rabies. ______
43. Take the newspaper when you leave. ______
44. This engine operates more efficiently than the one I bought last week. ______
45. The students all studied the material so that they would pass the course. ______
46. This is a restaurant that the community should support with its patronage. ______
47. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. ______
48. Because he failed to stop at the intersection, the police officer issued him a traffic ticket.

______

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 2

Questions 49–52: Underline the *noun clause* in each of the following sentences.

49. The jury didn't believe that the defendant was innocent.

50. What you have to do is find the most efficient way to solve the problem.

51. His parents didn't understand why he wanted to leave the family farm and move to the big city.

52. Whoever solves the difficult problem facing the family will be regarded as a hero.

Questions 53–61: Underline all the *prepositional phrases* in each sentence. Tell whether each is used as an *adjective* or an *adverb.*

53. The cat sniffed at the omelet. ____________________

54. The table by the door is a valuable antique. ____________________

55. Jim ran around the neighborhood every evening after supper. ____________________

56. Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go. ____________________

57. Get me to the church on time. ____________________

58. The man with the hoe is our gardener. ____________________

59. The sign on the wall read "Think before you act." ____________________

60. The ambulance turned down the street. ____________________

61. I always put coffee grounds down the drain. ____________________

Questions 62–70: Identify each of the italicized clauses in the sentences below as either *restrictive* or *nonrestrictive.* Set off the nonrestrictive clauses with commas.

62. Students *who are late* will not be admitted to class.

63. Joe's birthday party *which had been carefully planned* went smoothly.

64. The team *that scores the most points* wins.

65. Colonel John Glenn *who was one of the first astronauts* became a senator in Ohio.

66. Bus drivers *who are generally underpaid* work long hours.

67. Passengers think highly of bus drivers *who are kind and considerate.*

68. Anyone *who wishes to succeed at anything* must be willing to work long and hard.

69. Athletes *who want a shortcut to muscle development* take steroids.

70. The canoe *that has the leaks* is theirs, not ours.

Check your answers with those on page 78.

SENTENCE STRUCTURES

You know what a sentence is. You know the basic patterns words take to form sentences. Now you're ready to learn more about how phrases and clauses combine to form sentences.

Simple Sentences

Many of the sentences we've used as examples have been *simple sentences*—sentences composed of one independent clause. A simple sentence has only one complete subject and one complete predicate.

> The moon is beautiful.

The moon is the complete subject. *Is beautiful* is the complete predicate.

A sentence may have a compound subject or a compound predicate (or both) and still be simple.

> The earth and the moon are beautiful.

The sentence now contains a *compound* subject—*The earth and the moon*—but it's still only one *complete* subject. Now, let's add another verb to the predicate. The two verbs are italicized.

> The earth and the moon *are* beautiful and *shine* on each other.

Compound subjects and predicates can add vivid relationships to your writing.

We still have a simple sentence, now with a compound subject and a compound predicate. But look what happens when we put another subject in front of the second verb.

> The earth and the moon are beautiful, and *they* shine on each other.

Now we have a different sort of sentence structure. We have a *compound sentence.* We now have two independent clauses, two separate subject-predicate units joined with a comma and a coordinate conjunction.

Compound Sentences

Two simple sentences can be joined into one compound sentence by a comma and a coordinate conjunction. The word *coordinate* means "equal rank." Coordinate conjunctions join clauses of the same kind—here, two independent clauses. The common coordinate conjunctions are *and, but, or, nor, for, yet,* and *so.*

Simple sentences may also sometimes be joined with a semicolon to form a compound sentence. This is especially true if the relationship between the clauses is perfectly clear; a coordinate conjunction isn't necessary to express or emphasize the relationship (Figure 6).

Note that each of the simple sentences has a subject and a predicate.

SIMPLE SENTENCES

Complete Subject	Complete Predicate
The tulips	are blooming.
The tulips and the daffodils	are blooming.
The tulips and the daffodils	are blooming and cheer up our yard.
The tulips and the daffodils	are blooming.
They	cheer up our yard.

COMPOUND SENTENCES

Complete Subject	Complete Predicate		Complete Subject	Complete Predicate
The tulips and the daffodils	are blooming	, and	they	cheer up our yard.

Figure 6—Simple and Compound Sentence Structures

Each clause is a complete sentence. Nothing is omitted from the two sentences when they're joined. Also, the period at the end of the first sentence is replaced by a comma, which is then followed by a conjunction.

Bob may open his own shop, *or* he may go into business with his father.

Ann was late getting to the restaurant, *for* she missed the train and had to take the bus.

The lawyer was usually late, *yet* he expected the client to be on time.

Her children are talented musicians, *but* they don't like to practice.

Compound sentences may have more than two independent clauses. The clauses can be joined either by semicolons or by means of commas and a coordinating conjunction.

I swam; Mary dived; Jane surfed; Mom sunbathed; Dad stayed home.

John ate pizza, Lou drank soda, and Sam licked an ice cream cone.

Remember, only ideas that are related should be combined to make a compound sentence. Should the following two simple sentences be combined in one compound sentence?

Alice likes expensive jewelry. She plans to enter college.

No they shouldn't. Both ideas are about Alice, but otherwise they have nothing to do with each other. The sentences shouldn't be joined.

In summary, *a compound sentence contains two or more simple sentences that are logically related*. There may be a comma and a conjunction between the simple sentences, or there may be a semicolon with no conjunction.

Complex Sentences

Another kind of sentence consists of an independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses. A sentence containing both an independent and a dependent clause is a *complex sentence*. Remember, a dependent clause is one used as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

1. She wore a dress that was made of velvet.
2. I applied for the position because I am unhappy in my present job.
3. He asked what the customer wanted.

As you can see by these examples, the word *complex* doesn't mean that the sentence is complicated. Complex means that the sentence structure has become more elaborate. One of the clauses depends on another of the clauses to make sense. This dependent clause can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

To form a complex sentence, combine an independent clause with a dependent clause. An independent clause makes a complete grammatical statement. It can stand alone and function as a sentence. A dependent clause can *not* stand alone. It depends upon the remainder of the sentence in which it appears.

Let's look at the three examples again, one at a time.

The first example has as its main idea *She wore a dress*, an independent clause that could be a sentence by itself. The rest of the sentence, *that was made of velvet*, is a clause. *That* is its subject, and *was* is its verb. But to what does *that* refer? It's a relative pronoun that must refer to an antecedent in the same sentence. So *that was made of velvet* is a dependent relative clause, acting as an adjective modifying *dress*. *She wore a dress that was made of velvet* is, therefore, a complex sentence.

The second example also has two clauses. The main, independent clause is *I applied for the position*. It can stand alone. However, it has a dependent adverbial clause attached—*because I am unhappy in my present job*. As you know, any clause beginning with *because* can't be a sentence by itself. The reader would ask, *because* what? In this sentence, the dependent clause modifies the verb *applied*.

Now look at the third example and see if you can analyze it for yourself. What's the independent clause? What's the dependent clause? What function (part of speech) does the dependent idea perform in the complete sentence? *Answer*: The third example has as its main idea *he asked*, an independent clause that could be a sentence all by itself. The clause *what the customer wanted* tells what he asked. The clause is used as a noun and serves as a direct object. This sentence is a complex sentence.

When you're analyzing sentences, keep in mind that writers and speakers often omit the relative pronoun *that* when it introduces an adjectival clause. Careful writers and speakers don't, however, omit *who, whose, whom*, or *which* in this context.

> This is the kind of book I like to read.
>
> The car he likes to drive is the small one.

In these sentences, the pronoun *that* is understood.

> This is the kind of book *that* I like to read.
>
> The car *that* he likes to drive is the small one.

These are still complex sentences even when the *that* is missing. When you see a clause that looks independent but acts like a modifier, see if one of the relative pronouns (*who, whom, whose, which, that*) can be placed before the subject. If inserting *that* makes sense, then you know the clause is a dependent clause, and it's part of a complex sentence.

Here are some more examples of complex sentences. For each, the dependent clause is italicized, and the word or words that it modifies are boldfaced. The rest of the independent clause is in regular type. Notice that for the first two sentences, the dependent clause is in the middle of the independent clause.

> The **cat** *that he shot* was rabid.
>
> The **girl** *who met us* is seventeen.
>
> We **left** *when Jim arrived.*
>
> The doctor **will go** *wherever she is needed.*
>
> She told me *she'd be late.*

In the last sentence, the dependent noun clause isn't modifying any other word in the sentence. Here, it's used as a noun clause, a direct object of the verb *told.* Also, notice that the relative pronoun *that* is omitted.

Compound or Complex?

> The bus stops here, but it is always late.
>
> Although the bus stops here, it is always late.

These two sentences say basically the same thing. However, they have different sentence structures. They have subtle differences in meaning. The first sentence joins two main clauses with the coordinate conjunction *but.* It's a compound sentence. It has two separate clauses that can stand alone.

The second sentence shifts the emphasis to the independent clause *it is always late* by changing *the bus stops here* to a dependent adverb clause. Because this sentence has one independent clause and one dependent clause, it's a complex sentence.

How, then, can you tell the difference between a compound sentence and a complex one? Remember that the clauses in a compound sentence are always independent ones and are joined by one of the coordinate conjunctions or a semicolon. The only coordinate (equal rank) conjunctions are *and, but, or, nor, for, yet,* and *so.* A test for a compound sentence is to see if you can separate it into two parts so that each can stand alone.

If only one of the clauses is an independent one, the sentence is complex. You might want to review the signal words for dependent clauses (clauses used as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs); they can clue you that a dependent clause follows.

Try these two sentences:

> Hang the curtains now, or they will wrinkle.
>
> The place that he wanted most to visit was Disneyland.

If you said the first sentence was compound and the second complex, you're right. Did you see the coordinate conjunction *or* linking the two independent clauses, and did you see the signal word *that* clueing you to a dependent adjectival clause?

Note: A verbal in a sentence doesn't necessarily make the sentence complex. Verbals and their modifiers are phrases, not clauses.

> Running too fast, the football player fell to the ground.
>
> He wanted to win the governor's trophy.

These sentences, both containing verbal phrases, are simple sentences since they each contain only one clause.

A Review of Terms

You've studied simple, compound, and complex sentences. A review of the definitions of these and related terms will help you to identify each kind of sentence.

Simple sentence. A group of words is a simple sentence if it makes sense by itself and has one subject and predicate.

> Randy shoveled the snow.

Randy is the complete subject and *shoveled the snow* is the complete predicate.

Clause. The addition of a clause to a simple sentence transforms it to either a compound or a complex sentence. A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a predicate. An *independent* or *main* clause is a clause that can stand alone and make sense. A *dependent*, or *subordinate*, clause doesn't make complete sense by itself. It depends on the main part of the sentence (the independent clause) to make sense.

> Hannah blushed when David kissed her.

The independent (main) clause is *Hannah blushed.* The dependent (subordinate) clause is *when David kissed her.*

Compound sentence. Two or more independent clauses joined either by a comma and a conjunction, or by a semicolon, form a compound sentence.

> Hannah ran out of the room, but David followed her.
>
> Hannah was upset; she told David not to do that again.

A compound sentence can always be divided into two or more sentences.

> Hannah ran out of the room. David followed her.
>
> Hannah was upset. She told David not to do that again.

Complex sentence. A main clause and one or more dependent clauses make up a complex sentence.

> The plane *that was late* had engine trouble.
>
> *While you were sleeping*, the plane *that had engine trouble* landed and took off again.

Compound-complex sentence. A sentence can be both compound and complex at the same time. A compound-complex sentence has at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

> Jesse went to the Metropolitan Opera with Liz, who had been there many times; Eli went with Olivia, who had never been there before.

This sentence has two independent (main) clauses: *Jesse went to the Metropolitan Opera with Liz* and *Eli went with Olivia*. It also has two dependent (subordinate) clauses: *who had been there many times* and *who had never been there before*.

English in Action 3

Sentences can be *simple, compound, complex,* or *compound-complex.* Identify the sentence structure of each of the following sentences.

1. The little girl and her older sister opened their presents with great enthusiasm.
2. Even though they were both very tired from their long trip, Elizabeth worked in the garden and Arthur cut the grass.
3. Grandmother carefully arranged her best china, crystal, silver, and linen on the large dining room table, and Grandfather rounded up enough chairs for all the guests to sit on.
4. The waiter explained that the soup was prepared from seven vegetables from the restaurant's garden.
5. I said that I was tired.
6. With great enthusiasm and with the usual curiosity of a small child, the little boy from the south of France devoured the five pastries in the display case and then asked for more.
7. At this time of year in this part of the world, the nights are long, but the nights in your part of the world are longer.
8. Because the builder wasn't an expert in construction, he produced a poor house, and the owners had to make frequent repairs.
9. I acted my part in the play in a sincere manner and accepted with pleasure the enthusiastic applause of the several thousand spectators in the auditorium.
10. The car that you bought is beautiful.

Check your answers with those on page 75.

Practice Exercise 3

Questions 1–5: Some of the following pairs of sentences can be combined to make *compound sentences,* but some should not be. Read them carefully, and decide which pairs contain related ideas. Rewrite those with related ideas as compound sentences on a separate sheet of paper.

1. The girls had left early. They arrived home too late for dinner.

   ______

2. Their bus had been delayed. Their dog was named Nickey.

   ______

3. Plans for the party are still indefinite. They finished some sewing they had started on Monday.

   ______

4. Kathleen had cut out a new pair of slacks. Marianne was working on the jacket.

   ______

5. The material for the jacket was an attractive plaid. They stopped for a cold drink before finishing the job.

   ______

Questions 6–15: Each of the following *complex sentences* has one *independent* and one *dependent clause.* Circle the dependent clause, and tell whether it's used as an *adjective* or as an *adverb.*

6. B is willing to try anything that will improve his condition.
7. The weather vane, which is on the roof of the barn, is pointing toward the west.
8. I went to the conference after I received your report.
9. Unless the directions are followed carefully, the results will not be satisfactory.
10. Will the person whose car is blocking the driveway please move the car now?
11. We will wait for you where the road forks.
12. Read the opinions of the best authorities on the subject before you make up your mind.
13. Martin Van Buren, who was the eighth president of the United States, was a native of New York State.
14. Please close the book that is on your desk.
15. The paint that you ordered for the kitchen wall is washable.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 3

Questions 16–22: Label each sentence as *simple, compound,* or *complex.*

16. Milk that is sour can be used for cooking.
17. Early this morning the ambulance sped down the street.
18. George refused the other position after he received a raise in salary.
19. The train, which was delayed by a blizzard, was an hour late.
20. The cost of this perfume is high, but the price includes the tariff.
21. The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes was formed by an eruption of Mount Katmai, Alaska.
22. The United States Naval Academy is located at Annapolis, and the United States Military Academy is located at West Point.

Check your answers with those on page 80.

SENTENCE REPAIRS

Beginning writing often contains four common problems: fragments, run-ons, misplaced and dangling modifiers, and mixed constructions. These mistakes are easy to make—but they're also easy to fix, once you're aware of them.

Fragments

A *sentence fragment* is an incomplete sentence. Sentence fragments are ungrammatical because they lack one or more of the three elements of a complete sentence:

- Subject
- Predicate
- Complete thought

To make sure your sentences are complete, look at the structure of each sentence. Pay special attention to sentences with verbal phrases or dependent clauses. Writers often make mistake verbals for predicates. Others think that they have a complete sentence because they see the subject and the verb in a dependent clause.

Fragments commonly occur when modifying phrases or dependent clauses aren't attached to an independent clause. The sentence just needs the right punctuation.

> *Fragment*: Not having anything else to do. I turned on the television.
>
> *Complete sentence:* Not having anything else to do, I turned on the television.
>
> *Fragment*: Harry enjoyed three things most in life. To eat, drink, and be merry.
>
> *Complete sentence:* Harry enjoyed three things most in life: to eat, drink, and be merry.

Again, to avoid fragments, you just have to make sure each group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with an end stop (a period, question mark, or exclamation point) contains a subject and predicate and states a complete thought.

Don't be misled by sentences around the fragment. When you read the fragment in context, with sentences before and after it, it can make sense. The surrounding sentences help you to obtain the meaning. Make sure to focus on the structure of each word group beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period. If that group of words doesn't contain a subject and a predicate, it's a fragment. And remember that verbals (participles, gerunds, and infinitives) form phrases, not clauses.

You can often easily correct a fragment by attaching it to a complete sentence before or after it.

> *Fragment:* Running down the street. The boy tripped and fell.
>
> *Sentence:* Running down the street, the boy tripped and fell.

The other way to correct a fragment is to insert a subject and/or a complete predicate as needed.

> The boy was running down the street. He tripped and fell.

Run-on Sentences

Many people mistakenly define run-on sentences as wordy sentences that "run on" too long. But the term *run-on* actually has a much more specific grammatical meaning. It refers to two or more sentences written as one (Figure 7). For example:

> The bus stops here it is always late.
>
> *Correct*: Yesterday we went to the store. When we got there, we realized we had no money.

It's a mistake to think that a run-on sentence can be corrected by inserting commas. For example, to punctuate the first part of the example in question in the following manner would be incorrect.

> *Incorrect*: Yesterday we went to the store, when we got there we realized we had no money.

FIGURE 7—A run-on sentence is like a collision of two sentences.

It's incorrect because a comma is used to connect what really are two sentences. To use a comma in that manner is to make what's called a *comma splice.*

A mark of punctuation that can join main clauses is a semicolon.

> Yesterday we went to the store; when we got there, we realized we had no money.

Sometimes a run-on can be corrected by adding a coordinate conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*) after the comma.

> Yesterday, we went to the store, but when we got there we realized we had no money.

A final way to correct a run-on, if appropriate, is to change the structure of one of the clauses. You can make one of them a dependent clause.

> Although we went to the store yesterday, when we got there we realized we had no money.

The comma is now appropriate because it's setting off an introductory dependent clause, not trying to join two independent clauses. See the difference?

When you need to correct a run-on or comma splice error, which method should you use?

1. Make two separate sentences.
2. Use a semicolon.
3. Use a comma and a coordinate conjunction.
4. Restructure the sentence.

Several considerations should guide your decision. Ask yourself, How closely related are the two ideas, and how long are the clauses? If the ideas aren't closely related, you might opt for two separate sentences. (Of course, if the two ideas aren't related in some way, they shouldn't be following each other, even if in separate sentences.) If the two clauses are long, or if one is long and one is short, you might want to make two separate sentences. Two separate sentences will also place more emphasis on each idea.

If the ideas are tightly related, you might want to choose the second option. You can keep the ideas in one sentence joined with a semicolon.

Ask yourself, Does the relationship between the ideas need to be explicitly expressed? If so, then you would want to choose the third option—a comma and a coordinate conjunction.

Finally, what kind of sentence structures have you used in the surrounding text? If you use mostly simple and compound sentences, you might want to choose the fourth option and restructure your sentence into a complex one. To do this, change one of the clauses to a dependent one.

Any of the options will correct a run-on or comma splice. Your choice will depend on the context in which the error is found. Learning to make choices such as this is part of learning to develop an effective writing style.

English in Action 4

The following passage contains numerous sentence fragments and run-ons. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the passage in complete sentences.

> The history of civilization in Canada isn't very long. Compared with other areas of the world that are heavily populated today. Archeologists haven't found any fossils any older than around 30,000 years old, that probably indicates there were no earlier forms of humans in Canada. As there were in Africa, for instance. Of course, the weather wasn't very hospitable to people, the last ice age only ended several thousand years ago, meanwhile, complex societies based on agriculture were developing in Mexico.

Check your answers with those on page 75.

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Two kinds of sentence faults that are very similar are *misplaced modifiers* and *dangling modifiers*. Having a misplaced modifier means that everything the sentence needs is in the sentence, but the components must be rearranged. A dangling modifier means that something (usually the subject of the sentence) is missing from the sentence.

Misplaced Modifiers

Words, phrases, and clauses can have one meaning in one place in a sentence, another meaning in another position, and little or no meaning in still another position. A modifier—a word, a phrase, or a clause—that's in the wrong place is called a *misplaced modifier*. Consider the following example:

> The technician identified the virus looking through the microscope.

In that sentence, the participial phrase, *looking through the microscope*, is a misplaced modifier (Figure 8). The sentence, to be sure, does have a noun for the participial phrase to modify. However, the technician, not the virus, should be the one who looks through the microscope. Let's move that participial phrase so that the sentence says what it really means.

> *Looking through the microscope*, the technician identified the virus.

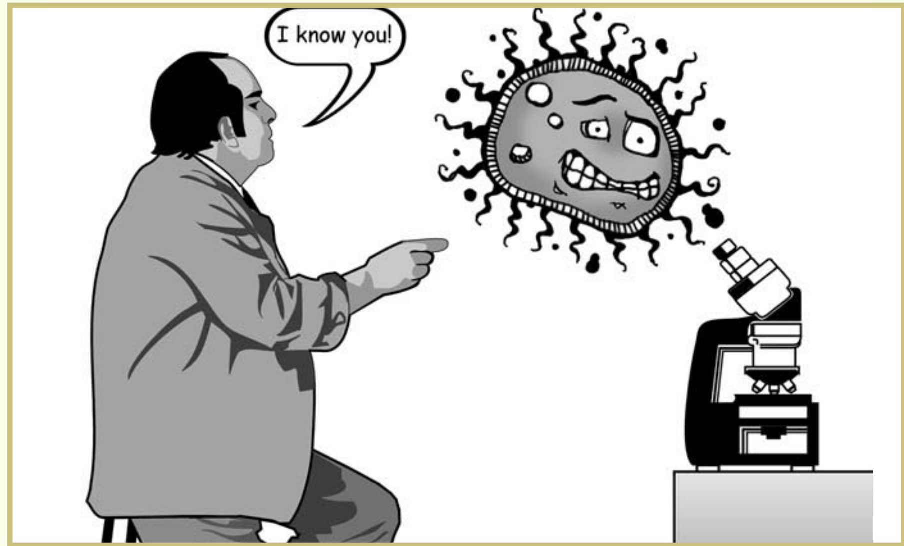


FIGURE 8—A misplaced modifier can distort the meaning of a sentence.

Some amusing statements are made by those who fail to observe this rule: *A phrase should be placed as close as possible to the word it modifies.* Classified ad sections have long provided examples of faulty phrase reference, such as the following:

> FOR SALE: Model A Ford by private party with completely overhauled motor and repainted body.

> WANTED: Bicycle for young boy in good condition.

Less ridiculous, but also incorrect, are the following statements:

> *Flying just above the treetops*, we saw the small airplane lose a wing.

> *Screaming loudly* we gazed at the demented man.

The sentences should be revised so that the italicized phrases are next to the nouns they modify.

> We saw a small airplane lose a wing while *flying just above the treetops.*

> We gazed at the *loudly screaming* demented man.

> We gazed at the demented man *screaming loudly.*

So, make sure that modifying clauses and phrases relate clearly to the words they modify.

Dangling Modifiers

A sentence fault similar to a misplaced modifier is a dangling modifier. Dangling modifiers are usually verbal phrases (participial, gerund, or infinitive phrases). They seem to dangle, usually from the beginning of the sentence. There's no word in the sentence that the phrase can logically describe.

> *Answering the phone*, my paperwork gets behind.

Now, since a participle is an adjective, it must describe a noun or pronoun. A noun or pronoun should be close to it. The only word here that the phrase could possibly describe is the noun *paperwork*. Of course, that doesn't make sense: the paperwork didn't answer the phone. So, the participial phrase is left hanging, with no noun or pronoun to modify. Let's put a logical noun or pronoun into the sentence:

> Answering the phone, *I* get behind on my paperwork.

Now, consider the following sentence in which there is a dangling modifier.

> To run well, good running shoes are needed.

Literally, it's saying that good running shoes run well. A person belongs in those shoes.

> To run well, you need good running shoes.

Why might the following sentence tickle a reader's funny bone?

> Lisa borrowed a bicycle from a friend with saddlebags.

No wonder the friend has saddlebags, if Lisa has her bike. No, the writer really meant the *bicycle* had saddlebags.

Don't dangle your modifiers. Always make sure the word being modified is actually in the sentence. Also, make sure the modifier is located as close as possible to the modified word.

Uneven Parallelism

Writers often try to summarize a thought or describe a situation by listing items that are similar in content and function. When presenting two or more items in a series, it's important that each one have the same grammatical form. For example, if one is a noun, each item should be a noun. Likewise, if one is a relative clause, each should be a relative clause. The likeness of form will enable the reader to see the likeness of content and function more easily. When all the parts share the same grammatical form, we say that they are *parallel*.

Let's look at a simple example.

He likes running and to ski.

Here, *running* and *to ski* are both parts of the direct object. Since they are performing the same function, they should be in the same structure.

He likes running and skiing.

or

He likes to run and to ski.

Here's another example.

His papers are interesting because of their originality, their humor, and he also organized them excellently.

Did you feel somewhat off balance when you read *he also organized them excellently*? Was that the wording you were expecting? Even if you were not consciously thinking that *originality* and *humor* are single nouns with the pronoun *their* describing them, the repetition of the similar structure probably led you to expect it again.

Here's a more satisfying wording that maintains the parallel structure:

His papers are interesting because of their originality, their humor, and their excellent organization.

Below you will find some more examples of violations of parallelism in a series.

Inconsistency in a series. In each of the following pairs of examples, the first sentence contains a violation of parallel structure in a series. The second maintains parallel structure.

Awkward: The personnel officer wants a new administrative assistant who is bright, efficient, hard-working, and the person must be neatly dressed.

Parallel: The personnel officer wants a new administrative assistant who is bright, efficient, hard-working, and *neatly dressed*.

Awkward: The most serious problems our cities face are poverty, the criminal, and disease.

Parallel: The most serious problems our cities face are poverty, *crime,* and disease.

Awkward: He couldn't decide between sitting down with a good book and to go to the movies.

Parallel: He couldn't decide between sitting down with a good book and *going to the movies.*

Awkward: He passed, kicked, and was able to get in some running.

Parallel: He passed, kicked, and *ran.*

Awkward: At his press conference, the president spoke of the political situation, of the economic situation, and talked about our military posture.

Parallel: At his press conference, the president spoke of *the political, economic*, and *military situations.*

Imperfect coordinate structure. Correlative conjunctions *(both/and, either/or, not only/but also*) should be preceded and followed by parallel constructions. Here are a few examples.

Awkward: It was a long speech and very boring.

Parallel: It was a long and very boring speech.

Awkward: Not only flames, but the firefighters must also guard against smoke and gases.

Parallel: The firefighters must guard not only against flames but also against smoke and gases.

Awkward: The movie was not only a financial success, but it also succeeded as art.

Parallel: The movie was not only a financial success but also an artistic success.

Awkward: Whether angry or when he was impatient, the diplomat never forgot his good manners.

Parallel: Whether angry or impatient, the diplomat never forgot his good manners.

In working with correlative conjunctions, make sure that the words following each conjunction are of the same kind—adjective for adjective, verb for verb, preposition for preposition.

Omission of a relative clause. A less common, but still serious, breakdown in parallel construction occurs when we use the phrases *and who, and whom*, or *and which* without a preceding *who, whom*, or *which* clause. What's awkward about this sentence?

The candidate is a woman with an open mind and who is seeking her first public office.

The conjunction *and* acts as a signpost that directs us back toward a parallel *who, whom*, or *which*—a grammatical parallel we can't find. Parallel structure clarifies the sentence and gives it a more pleasing rhythm, too.

> The candidate is a woman *who* has an open mind and *who* is seeking her first public office.

Parallel structure makes words pleasant to the ear and helps to make a point clearly and emphatically. To recognize the power that parallel structure in writing and speaking can have, consider the following famous words of Julius Caesar, Patrick Henry, and John F. Kennedy, respectively:

> I came, I saw, I conquered.
>
> Give me liberty or give me death.
>
> And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

Practice Exercise 4

Questions 1–7: Test your knowledge by revising the italicized sections of the following sentences so that *parallel structure* will express parallel ideas.

1. Donald likes to play tennis and *cross-country running.* ______________________
2. Ginger is a gardener *with first-rate garden tools* and who has a beautiful garden.

   ____
3. Two things I promise: to work diligently and *succeed.* ______________________
4. The desk was piled with papers, folders, coffee cups, broken pencils, *and there were even two days' worth of half-eaten lunch.* ______________________
5. He was physically strong *as well as possessing keen intelligence.*

   ____
6. They hoped for peace *without being dishonored.*______________________

   ____
7. *In late March, April, and in May* the weather is warm enough here to begin planting a garden. ______________________

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 4

Questions 8–17: Identify the problem—*run-on, fragment, dangling participle,* or *lack of parallel construction*—in each of the following.

8. Her movement was limited in her left shoulder but her right shoulder was not.
9. His movement was limited in the left shoulder. Although he reported no pain.
10. He has been taking an antihistamine, what he really needs is a decongestant.
11. After she finished typing the letter, making the coffee, and filed the reports, Virginia took a break.
12. Henry got up each morning and walked the dog then he sat down and ate some breakfast, read the paper from cover to cover, and then he finally left for work.
13. Because he had never flown on an airplane before.
14. Walking down the street, the Chrysler building glistened in the winter sun.
15. Her greatest passions in life were quilting and to swim.
16. I saw a beautiful car, and it was British racing green, and it had unbelievable leather seats.
17. Because it is generally believed that professional writers never revise.

Check your answers with those on page 80.

PUNCTUATION AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

By inserting the correct punctuation in a sentence, we indicate the relationship between the ideas. What would be gibberish without punctuation is transformed into an intelligible statement. In conversation, we help convey our ideas by pauses, inflections, and emphasis. In writing, we do the same with punctuation marks. They are like the “traffic signals” of writing. Consider the following group of words in which no punctuation is given.

> On October 12 1994 Mrs John Brown wrote and asked Will it be possible for you to send me at your earliest convenience a new toaster

Although it’s possible to grasp the meaning of those words without any punctuation in them, notice how much easier it is to read and understand that sentence when punctuation has been added.

> On October 12, 1994, Mrs. John Brown wrote and asked, “Will it be possible for you to send me, at your earliest convenience, a new toaster?”

To use punctuation correctly, you must understand what a sentence is and how the parts of speech are used to structure sentences. If you use punctuation effectively, your writing will be more clear and easy to read. If you use punctuation poorly, your writing can be a confusing muddle of words.

There are two general classifications of punctuation.

1. End punctuation
2. Internal punctuation

End punctuation is used at the ends of sentences and consists of the following:

- Period .
- Question mark ?
- Exclamation point !

Internal punctuation is used inside sentences and consists of the following:

- Apostrophe ’
- Hyphen -
- Comma ,
- Quotation marks “ ”
- Semicolon ;
- Colon :
- Dash —

You should always know why you’re using a punctuation mark. In this section, we’ll explain the correct use of punctuation.

Periods

The period is often called the *full stop*. It indicates a definite pause at the end of either a declarative (statement) or an imperative (command) sentence.

Use a period to end statements, commands, or requests that aren't phrased as questions.

Statement: The sky is becoming cloudy.

Command: Close the window if it rains.

Request: Please bring me my umbrella.

Use a period for words that stand for full statements or commands.

Yes.

Next.

Use a period after fragments that are answers to questions.

When will you be ready? Soon.

Use a period for most abbreviations.

Mr. Feb. Atty. Dr. Sun. Inc.

If the abbreviation ends the sentence, use only one period. Also, when abbreviations consist of lowercase letters, don't space between the letters.

Mail this c.o.d.

Some abbreviations, including the two-letter abbreviations for American states, are written in solid capital letters, without periods.

YMCA CIA FBI PA ND TX

Use a period to separate dollars from cents.

$12.00 $34.55

Use a period as a decimal point in numbers.

0.99 2.74%

Question Marks

In speaking, if you ask a question, your voice rises in pitch at the end of the sentence. In written English, the inflection is indicated by a question mark.

When a tag question occurs at the end of a statement, use a comma before the question.

A *tag question* consists of a pronoun, a helping verb, and usually the word *not* (or the contraction *n't*).

> Nice weather, isn’t it?
>
> You agree, don’t you?

If a question is worded like a statement, indicate the questioning intention by using a question mark.

> You actually agree with him?
>
> Class has been canceled?

A polite request ends with a period, not a question mark.

> Please call if you have any questions.

An indirect question doesn't require a question mark.

> *Indirect question:* He wonders if you know when you'll hear about the job.
>
> *Direct question:* When will you hear about the job?

Don't be deceived by the number of words in a question. Long questions are still ended with question marks.

> Did you know that medical transcriptionists have to edit the language of the dictating physician to make it clear, but without changing the meaning, and without changing the overall tone and style of the physician?

Exclamation Points

End an exclamation with an exclamation point.

> Hey, everyone knows what these are for!
>
> I heard about your promotion. Congratulations!

The exclamation point is rarely appropriate in business writing. However, it has its place in personal letters and fiction. Avoid overusing the exclamation point, even in personal writing.

Commas

Now that we've covered end punctuation, we'll begin our study of internal punctuation. You learned about apostrophes and hyphens in the last study unit, so now we'll begin with commas.

When we talk, we separate our ideas by pausing between them. In writing, we represent these pauses by punctuation marks. The shortest pause is indicated by the *comma*—the most frequently used mark of punctuation.

Commas divide sentences into readable parts. The modern tendency is to use the comma much less often than formerly. Aside from following a few rules that everyone regards as standard, use the comma according to your intended meaning. But that doesn't mean you should automatically use a comma wherever you would pause in speaking a sentence. First, make sure there is a grammatical reason for the pause. Always know the reason for using a comma. Be certain that the commas are helping you to convey your ideas clearly.

Use a comma to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series.

> The new secretary is efficient, friendly, and intelligent.

When you have three or more items in a series, the final comma before the conjunction (*and, or, nor*) is optional.

> The new secretary is efficient, friendly and intelligent.

You should be consistent in your style—always use the final series comma, or always omit it. However, use the comma whenever omitting it would cause confusion about the meaning of the sentence. Confusion can result when one or more items in the series contains the word *and*. Here's an amusing example:

> Today Tommy has broken his bicycle, cut his finger, broken a window, disobeyed and hurt the dog.

Without a comma before *and*, the sentence says that Tommy disobeyed the dog. For the sake of clarity, the comma is required.

> Today Tommy has broken his bicycle, cut his finger, broken a window, disobeyed, and hurt the dog.

Don't use a comma after the conjunction.

> *Incorrect*: The new secretary is efficient, friendly, and, intelligent.

Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that precede and modify the same noun.

> The Scottish terrier is a stubborn, inquisitive, intelligent dog.
>
> It was a long, long time ago.

However, when the final adjective is so closely related to the noun that the words form one expression, no comma is necessary before the final adjective.

> If you're looking for a *dependable used car*, try Highland Used Cars.

> Buy three *18-ounce jars* at the store.

Never use a comma between a final adjective and a noun.

> *Incorrect*: The Scottish terrier is a stubborn, inquisitive, intelligent, dog.

If *etc.* ends a list, place a comma before the *etc.*, which means "and others." Never write "and etc." or you'll be writing "and and others."

Usually it's best to avoid *etc.* Instead, try to use specific details.

> *Weak*: The training for medical office assistants includes anatomy and physiology, medical law and ethics, oral and written communication, etc.

> *Stronger*: The training for medical office assistants includes anatomy and physiology, medical law and ethics, oral and written communication, and other areas necessary for effective job performance.

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*) that joins two independent clauses.

> Scientists studied the rock layers found in the Grand Canyon, and they were amazed by the results of their studies.

Coordinating conjunctions can close the gap between independent clauses.

If the independent clauses are short, the comma before the conjunction *and, or, nor*, or *for* may be omitted. However, don't omit the comma before *but* or *yet*. The comma helps indicate the contrast or shift in thought.

> I wrote the words and Ted wrote the music.

> They weren't invited, yet they attended.

Occasionally a semicolon may be used with a coordinating conjunction if the independent clauses are long and each contains commas.

> The offices of the new employees, those who began in the past six months, are in the new wing of the building; but the new employees, as far as I know, aren't happy with their offices.

Again, sometimes a comma is required to make a writer's meaning immediately clear, even in a short sentence.

> The waves washed away the pier and our boat drifted out to sea.

At first glance the sentence seems to say that the waves washed away the pier and our boat. Placing a comma before the *and* makes the meaning clear.

> The waves washed away the pier, and our boat drifted out to sea.

Remember, if you join two independent clauses with *only* a comma and *without* a conjunction, you make a comma splice, which should be avoided. The following sentence contains a comma splice:

> *Incorrect*: They weren't invited, they showed up anyway.

> *Correct*: They weren't invited, but they showed up anyway.

Use a comma to separate various introductory elements from the rest of the sentence.

When a dependent clause begins a sentence, use a comma after the dependent clause to separate it from the independent clause.

> When you've finished typing that letter, leave it on my desk.

Use a comma to set off introductory verbal phrases.

> *Infinitive phrase:* To earn interest, leave a balance of $500.

> *Participial phrase:* Frustrated, he pounded his fist on the desk.

An introductory gerund phrase will be the subject of the sentence. Never separate a subject and verb with a comma, unless there's a grammatical structure interrupting the flow of the sentence.

> *Incorrect*: Maintaining a balance of $500, is necessary to earn interest.
>
> *Correct*: Maintaining a balance of $500 is necessary to earn interest.
>
> *Also correct:* Maintaining a balance of $500, averaged monthly, is necessary to earn interest.

In the last example, the commas are setting off the phrase *averaged monthly*.

Short introductory prepositional phrases (up to four words) don't require a comma. However, use a comma to set off long introductory prepositional phrases.

> After weeks of thoughtful preparations and a great deal of work, we left for a three-day weekend.

Use a comma to set off interjections and transitional words and phrases from the rest of the sentence. Use a comma only if the transition or interjection could be removed without changing the basic meaning of the sentence.

> *Interjection*: Well, I'm glad you explained the matter to me.
>
> *Transition*: Meanwhile, I'll pack the car.

Here are some words and phrases that are commonly used as transitions: *accordingly, again, also, as a rule, as you know, at any rate, besides, by the way, consequently, finally, for example, furthermore, hence, however, I believe, if any, indeed, in brief, in fact, in other words, in the first place, in the meantime, moreover, namely, naturally, next, notwithstanding, of course, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, personally, respectively, still, that is, then, therefore, to be sure.*

Here are some other examples, used in sentences.

> The chef then added, believe it or not, a pound of butter to the cake batter.
>
> So, in short, we lost the game.

Use a comma to set off the names of the people addressed by the writer and the terms used in place of names. If the name comes in the middle of the sentence, use a comma on either side.

Would you prefer a hot dog or a hamburger, Walter?

Mr. Simmons, please type this letter immediately.

Let me tell you, fellow citizens, what I propose.

Use a comma to set off an expression that explains a preceding word. For example, set off appositives (nouns or noun phrases that define a preceding noun), certain dependent clauses, and other types of modifiers.

Appositive: We've visited Pennsylvania, *the Keystone State*, several times.

Adjectival clause: Dr. Kester, *who has spent his professional life in Brazil*, will speak on South American plants.

Participial phrase: Molecules, *composed of atoms*, are the smallest particle of a substance.

Notice that all three of these examples contain nonessential information. If the words set off by the commas were omitted, the most important information would remain. The basic sentence pattern would still make sense.

Don't use commas around explanatory words that are necessary for the core meaning of the sentence.

The British author George Bernard Shaw had a caustic tongue.

In this case, using commas to set off the name would be incorrect. *The British author* couldn't be identified unless the name is included.

Use a comma to set off a question that's added to a statement.

You mailed the letter, didn't you?

Use a comma to set off a contrasting expression within a sentence—an expression that usually starts with *not*, *seldom*, or *never*.

Mr. Marino has left for the day, not Mr. Maranco.

Birds often sing in the morning, seldom at night.

Use commas to separate large numbers in units of three digits.

1,429 1,789,000

Use a comma to set off the parts of a date or an address.

Mother was born June 29, 1913.

My address is 1352 Park Lane, Boise, Idaho.

I lived in Baltimore, Maryland, until I was five.

You'll also often use commas with quotation marks.

Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations—a person's exact words from an oral or printed source.

"The smartest creature is the chicken," said Abraham Lincoln, "because it only squawks after it has laid the egg."

When the person we're quoting is *also* quoting someone else, two kinds of quotation marks are used—double (" ") and single (' '). The double marks are used around the entire quotation. The single marks are placed around the words quoted within the entire quotation.

"Can you believe that Eleanor said 'I quit'? I can't!" said Amos.

Place quotation marks around the names of short stories, short poems, short musical compositions, songs, and lectures.

Many of us read "The Charge of the Light Brigade" last year.

One of his favorite songs is Cole Porter's "Night and Day."

When quotation marks are used with other punctuation, the position of the closing mark varies according to the meaning intended.

The comma should always be placed inside the quotation marks.

"Don't be late," he cautioned.

The period, like the comma, should always be placed inside the quotation marks.

Be sure to read Sandburg's "Chicago."

The semicolon is placed outside the quotation marks unless it's part of the quotation.

We loved the music of Stephen Foster so much that we wished we could have visited the home of the composer of "Old Kentucky Home"; however, that was impossible.

The colon, like the question mark, is placed inside the quotation marks when it's part of the quotation, but outside if it's not part of the quotation.

> I noted this statement in the chapter entitled "Better Letters": "The proper salutation is `Dear Sir or Madam:' when you don't know who will be reading the letter."

The question mark is placed inside the quotation marks when the sentence quoted is a question; otherwise, it's placed outside.

> "Who called?" she asked.

> Why was the clerk's hand trembling when he said, "This spoon is sterling silver"?

Ellipses

Ellipses are a series of three periods (. . .) used in a quotation to show that words have been omitted. If ellipses occur at the end of a sentence, add a fourth period. Otherwise, never use more than three periods.

> "I pledge allegiance to the flag . . . and to the republic for which it stands. . . ."

Ellipses are also used to show an unfinished thought.

> I wish we could go; if only . . .

Semicolons

What's stronger than a comma, yet weaker than a period? A semicolon. A semicolon (;) looks like a comma and a period put together. That's probably what led to the story about how the semicolon was invented. Someone who could never decide whether to use a comma or period decided in desperation to use both at once.

A semicolon indicates a major pause or break between thoughts. Yet it also shows that the thoughts are logically related. Be careful to understand the rules regarding its use. Semicolons draw attention to themselves—especially when they're used incorrectly. Use one only when you have a good reason.

Use a semicolon between independent clauses in a sentence if they aren't joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet*).

The most common use of the semicolon is to separate the clauses of a compound sentence.

> It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

> To err is human; to forgive, divine.

You normally won't use both a coordinate conjunction and a semicolon. However, if both clauses are long and contain commas, you may use a semicolon to indicate the spot where the two clauses join.

> The tour visited Sydney and then Melbourne, the capital of Australia; and it continued, after a stop of two days, on to Wellington, New Zealand.

Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by adverbs that show relationships between clauses. Such adverbs, sometimes called conjunctive adverbs, indicate the direction of thought of the speaker or writer.

> Our medical coverage provides for outpatient care; therefore, the charges will be paid in full.

Some frequently used conjunctive adverbs are *accordingly, also, consequently, for example, for instance, further, hence, however, indeed, in fact, moreover, nevertheless, then, therefore, thus*, and *whereas.*

Don't use a conjunctive adverb as if it were an ordinary conjunction. In spite of its joining power, the conjunctive adverb is an adverb. It won't hold two independent clauses together unless the conjunctive adverb is preceded by a semicolon.

> We were late in arriving at the concert; *consequently*, we had to sit in the balcony.

Here, *consequently* tells us that there's more to follow the main thought.

Before you use a semicolon, make sure that the transitional words really are introducing another independent clause. Don't use semicolons when these words are used as interrupters in clauses joined by *and, but, so*, or another coordinating conjunction.

> Our medical coverage provides for outpatient care, so the charges will, therefore, be paid in full.

Use semicolons to separate a series of items that contain commas.

Use of the semicolon in this manner prevents confusion.

> Mr. Havad hails from Jamestown, Virginia; Mr. Lister, from Boise, Idaho; and Ms. Cunningham, from Jackson, Mississippi.

Finally, remember not to use a semicolon in place of a colon.

Colons

A colon means, in effect, "Note what follows."

Use a colon before a list of items, if the list is renaming another noun. Colons are used after the expressions *as follows* or *the following.*

> The following companies have submitted bids: IBM, AT&T, Sprint, and MCI.

> The minimum equipment for an office is as follows: business computer, computer desk, comfortable chair, drip coffeepot, two filing cabinets, one fax machine, and two telephones.

If, however, the series of items is part of a simple statement, no colon is necessary.

> The minimum equipment for an office includes a business computer, computer desk, comfortable chair, drip coffeepot, two filing cabinets, one fax machine, and two telephones.

Don't use a colon after a form of the verb *to be*.

> *Incorrect*: The companies who submitted bids are: IBM, AT&T, Sprint, and MCI.

> *Correct*: The companies who submitted bids are IBM, AT&T, Sprint, and MCI.

Colons are also used after introductory headings, such as the words *Correct* and *Incorrect* in the previous example.

If you can substitute the words "that is" or "they are" for a colon, then the colon is probably correct.

> I have three children: Stella, Stanley, and Jonathan.

Use a colon to introduce a long or formal direct quotation.

The coach of the winning team replied: "This is a great victory for the local team and we're all very proud of the teamwork and the spirit of cooperation that made it all possible." (The colon is used here to separate the introductory words from the *long* quotation that follows.)

My sister replied, "This is a very beautiful garden." (The comma is used here to introduce a *short* quotation.)

In addition to its function as a sign of introduction, the colon has certain conventional uses that are familiar to most people. The most common ones are these:

- Following the salutation of a formal letter

  Dear Mr. Unger:

- Separating hours and minutes in indicating time

  It's 6:20 P.M.

- Separating scriptural references

  He read John 2:4.

Dashes

Many writers misuse dashes. They sprinkle their writing with dashes to indicate pauses where commas, periods, or semicolons should be. Remember, a dash isn't an end mark of punctuation, nor is it to be used as an all-purpose mark that saves you having to determine what other mark is appropriate. If you find yourself liberally sprinkling dashes throughout your writing, you may need to revise so you convey your precise meaning.

A dash indicates a break in the thought or structure of the sentence. Dashes are used to set off interrupting comments, explanations, or examples.

Use a dash to follow an introductory element or to precede a final sentence element. Use a pair of dashes to enclose an element within the sentence.

Our chef has created the ultimate chocolate fantasy—the mousse torte.

High-calorie desserts—such as cheesecake, mousse, and cream puffs—simply go to waist.

Notice that the dash is much longer than the hyphen. Typists indicate a dash by hitting two hyphens in a row, with no extra space on either side (—) of them.

Use a dash or a pair of dashes to indicate an abrupt shift in sentence structure or thought.

> The bachelor said, "I understand that marriage is an honorable institution, and I have often thought—but then who would really want to live in an institution?"

Use dashes for emphasis, or to set off a repetition.

> Would she—could she—even consider the possibility?
>
> For ten dollars—a mere ten dollars—he sold out his friend.

Parentheses

Use parentheses to set off expressions that are incidental, explanatory, or unimportant to the main thought of the sentence.

> You've already studied the digestive system (see pages 25–28).

The end punctuation of the sentence is placed outside the closing parentheses. (However, when an entire sentence is a parenthetical remark, the whole sentence falls inside the parentheses, like the sentence you're reading now.)

Practice Exercise 5

Questions 1–5: Insert periods, question marks, exclamation points, dashes, and commas in the following sentences.

1. Fencing demands a keen eye quick reflexes and agility
2. Originally a training method for swordsmanship and dueling fencing today is a harmless sport unless of course you plan to replace Zorro
3. Every precaution however is taken to prevent accidental injury
4. Do you know for instance that the weapons have dulled edges and blunted tips capped with buttons
5. Points are scored by merely touching the opponent

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 5

Questions 6–15: Insert the commas that are needed in the following sentences.

6. The rent by the way is due on the first of the month.
7. As soon as they arrived they jumped in the water.
8. For breakfast I'll have cereal toast orange juice and coffee.
9. Today we went to the store to the post office and to the bank.
10. Dawson the Chicago outfielder was in my opinion the real star of the game.
11. According to Ruskin “Fine art is that in which the hand the head and the heart of man go together.”
12. Irving who lived from 1783 to 1859 was the first major literary figure of the new nation.
13. When Frances returns from her vacation in California I hope to have a vacation myself.
14. Commas like exclamation marks are overused by some writers don’t you think?
15. I like to see the train which was built decades ago speed along the track.

Questions 16–20: Insert quotation marks, semicolons, colons, and dashes where needed. Not every sentence may need a mark.

16. I’ll meet you at Spring Garden Street don't be late.
17. She listed the planets as follows Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.
18. I love that old blues song, said Tim.
19. Last night I saw forty-two compact cars.
20. I’ve seen Andy's project where's yours?

Questions 21–30: Choose the proper punctuation in each of these sentences by circling either the comma or the semicolon.

21. Kathy is having lunch with me tomorrow [, ;] we’ll probably go to Barney’s.
22. Now I’m beginning to live a little [, ;] and I feel less like a sick oyster at low tide.
23. The RAF kept control of the skies in 1940 [, ;] consequently, Britain was one of the victorious countries.
24. Power tends to corrupt [, ;] absolute power corrupts absolutely.
25. The night was bitterly cold and windy [, ;] but there was a full moon shining on the snow.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 5

26. Faith deserves a chance to be president of her organization [, ;] knowing as she does the rules for running meetings and the goals of her group.

27. Brigit and Rex applied for the same job [, ;] but only one applicant could be accepted.

28. The office procedures were posted on the staff bulletin board [, ;] consequently, James's decision was hard to understand.

29. We were asked to bring two categories of objects: soft goods, including paper, linens, and clothing items [, ;] and hard goods, including furniture, tools, and small appliances.

30. The regulations allow only 200 people in the dance hall at one time [, ;] however, we made an exception last weekend.

Check your answers with those on page 81.

SENTENCE STYLE

Perfect sentences don't just flow out of any writer, even the most accomplished professionals. All writing, it has been said, is the art of rewriting. The writing process includes prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, proofreading, and for some writers, "publishing" (showing the finished work to its intended audience). So, if you're disappointed that your first attempts at clear, grammatical, interesting sentences aren't successful, don't be discouraged! When you're struggling to get your ideas on paper, it's understandable that you'll make mistakes. It's best not to worry about them. As you write, let your ideas flow without worrying about grammar.

Fear of mistakes is the most common cause of writer's block. Don't let that fear stop your creative flow. Just write! Once you have something to work with, then you can revise as many times as necessary to organize your thoughts more clearly. Then you can perfect your grammar and mechanics.

In this section, we'll concentrate on some practical strategies you can apply to crafting effective sentences.

Beginning a Sentence

How you begin a sentence can commit you to a clear and lucid statement, or to a tangled and confused mess. You establish the momentum of a sentence at the outset. But you're lucky; unlike a traditional Chinese scroll painter, you can rewrite until you get it right.

If you're unsure of how to begin a sentence, you may be tempted to structure each sentence in the same way. But that would lead to a drumming monotony of style, detracting from your argument and alienating your reader.

There are many ways to begin a sentence. Nine of the basic ways are demonstrated in this section. Study the following examples carefully. Knowing them can give you greater flexibility of expression, greater variety of style, and greater power of persuasion.

1. The first and most common method of starting a sentence is to begin with the *subject* of the sentence.

   John likes ragtime piano.

   The dollar is under siege in foreign money markets.

Be on your guard not to overuse this pattern, however. You can use eight other ways to start a sentence.

2. An *adverb* can connect your sentence with the previous one or accent the main verb, since it comes in emphatic position.

   Contemptuously, the teacher answered Jane's simple question.

   Ironically, the dollar's slide in relation to the yen slowed after the Bank of Japan stopped buying dollars.

3. The *prepositional phrase* will permit you to introduce facts or interpretations of key importance to the sentence well before the main verb.

   At that embarrassing moment, Laurie walked in the front door.

   For the mission into deep space to become a reality, the United States must address two problems: funding and safety.

4. The *dependent adverbial clause* allows you to precisely qualify a verb, adverb, infinitive, or participle. At times it can be a useful device for creating good sentence flow.

   Since the rock was flaky and unstable, Curt climbed around the overhang.

   Unless you finish all of your chores, you won't be allowed to go out with your friends.

Notice, in these examples, that the dependent clause begins the sentence, while the more important main point comes at the end, where it gains the most emphasis.

These four sentence beginnings are the most common in daily speech and informal writing. The other five more often begin sentences in formal prose than in conversation. You'll find them helpful for certain kinds of special effects, such as narration, vivid description, and explanation of a complex process. But be careful! Each one requires a solid understanding of the grammatical structure that underlies it and knowledge of when and where to use it in your writing.

5. The *adjective*

   Fearful of the driving sleet, I pulled the car over to the shoulder.

   Funny though he thought it, no one else laughed at the joke.

6. The *present participle*

   Running the last five miles at a brisk pace, Clair outdistanced all her rivals in the marathon.

   Trying to avoid his mother, Paul sneaked in the back door and silently climbed the stairs.

   Seeking to establish his credibility, Myron quickly related his work background to the client.

7. The *past participle*

   Tired of battling car price increases, consumers have retreated into the used-car market.

   Encouraged by public sympathy and understanding, the school board began planning for a new tax referendum.

8. The *infinitive*

   To increase energy production, we must first provide business with tax incentives.

   To keep the dough hook from scraping the bowl, make sure you have locked the mixer head in the operating position.

   To improve our customer service, we need to hire two more people and institute a training program.

9. The *absolute construction.* An absolute construction is a parenthetical phrase that qualifies a whole clause or the rest of the sentence. An absolute construction is usually composed of a noun and a participle describing it. In a sense, it's like a condensed clause or other longer construction.

   Weather permitting, the company baseball game will be held this Sunday.

   The man at the bar sat dejectedly, *his head propped by his hand.*

The absolute construction, in the first example, means *if the weather is permitting.* In the second sentence, the absolute construction is a shortened form of the clause *his head was propped by his hand.*

English in Action 5

Rearrange each of the following sentences. Make them more emphatic by placing at the *beginning* of the sentence the component of each that could be there for emphasis. Punctuate the sentence correctly.

1. We'll be late for the play if we don't leave immediately.

   ____

2. The United States space program won't be resumed until the work on the newest space shuttle has been completed.

   ____

3. Yoga is an excellent means of keeping fit provided you're practicing it under careful supervision.

   ____

4. The rock group will perform in the park if it isn't raining.

   ____

5. The examination was difficult because it contained questions we hadn't studied.

   ____

6. We had spent the afternoon preparing for the exam because we were anxious about passing.

   ____

7. We listened to the weather report as we drove to the airport.

   ____

Check your answers with those on page 76.

Revising Shapeless Sentences

Avoid loading sentences with excess words and phrases. An overburdened sentence is too long and too heavy for its subject. Beneath the weight of unnecessary words, it will strain, bend, and sometimes snap into fragments.

Many writers overburden their sentences because they don't know how to end a sentence decisively. The results of cumbersome writing are inflation of language, difficulty in following the point, and boredom (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9—Overburdened writing can be hard for readers to manage.

Unwieldy, overloaded writing doesn't *move* according to a clear plan. The reader must constantly stop, backtrack, and pick up the line of argument before continuing—if he or she continues at all. This doesn't mean, of course, that we should swing to the opposite extreme and strive in each sentence for the brevity of a telegram. We want to use not *fewer* words, but the most *efficient* and *expressive* words for the topic.

Overburdened sentences result from two mistakes:

1. Piling up clauses and phrases into unpleasantly long, shapeless sentences

2. Stuffing sentences with wordy fillers, flourishes, or grammatical structures that serve no purpose

The shapeless sentence lacks architecture. Its writer wants to express an idea, but the writer keeps adding words to words until the structure grows beyond all bounds. Breaking up shapeless sentences into two or three shorter sentences will assure that the transitions between ideas are clear.

Shapeless: *The Scarlet Letter* is read by some people as being highly satirical, but that, I think, is to miss the mark by a mile, for while there is certainly humor in the book, especially when Hawthorne takes a lash at his ancestors and the little Puritans, who were the most intolerant brood that ever lived, yet it is with a reverent and sometimes affectionate attitude that he does this, not with spite.

Revised: Some people read *The Scarlet Letter* as a highly satirical book. I think that misses the mark. Certainly there is humor in the book, especially when Hawthorne lashes at his ancestors and the little Puritans, who were the most intolerant brood that ever lived. Yet he does this with a reverent and almost affectionate attitude, not with spite.

Shapeless: I think you'll be interested to learn that this is the first year since the introduction of our new air conditioner that warrantee claims have dropped, for both the number of complaints from customers and the dollars expended to satisfy complaining customers are quite a bit lower than in the previous four years.

Revised: You'll be interested to learn that this is the first year since the introduction of the new air conditioner that warrantee claims have dropped. Both the number of complaints and the dollars spent to satisfy them are much lower than in the previous four years.

Here's another common source of shapeless thinking: Linking a relative clause to another relative clause in a sentence. This interdependency of thought will bog down the reader in what James Thurber once called the "which mire."

Wordy: The committee's report, *which* followed several weeks of expert testimony, recommends that funds be appropriated *which* can be used to underwrite the installation of solar collecting panels *which* will test the effectiveness of solar heating during the Midwestern winter.

Concise: Following several weeks of expert testimony, the committee made its report. It recommends that we provide funds for the installation of solar collecting panels to test the effectiveness of solar heating during the Midwestern winter.

Wordy: Since there are several books *which* we're publishing at the same time next month, we may need to resort to a selective ad campaign *which* will give us the ability to saturate the media *which* are most appropriate for each book.

Concise: Because several of our books will appear at the same time next month, we may need to advertise selectively to achieve maximum saturation of the proper media for each book.

Dead Words

When revising shapeless sentences, look for dead words that you can drop to make your style clearer and more lively (Figure 10). Empty or inflated phrases are common "sentence stuffers" that bog down careless writing. Many of us unconsciously fall back on a whole list of words that say precious little. Delete them unless they serve a precise function in your sentence.

FIGURE 10—Avoid using these dead words.

DEAD WORDS
In regard to
in relation to
on the grounds that
due to the fact that
by means of
in connection with
in consideration of
for the specified reason that
in accordance with
with a view to

Wordy: *In regard to* your recent proposal, we are submitting a revised price list.

Concise: We are submitting the revised price list you requested.

Wordy: With a view to broadening the expertise of our personnel department's staff, we are offering seminars on interviewing. The employees *concerned* should consult the supervisors *involved, respectively*.

Concise: We are offering seminars on interviewing to improve the skills of our personnel department's staff. Interested employees should consult their supervisors.

The last example shows how harmful the three words *concerned, involved*, and *respectively* can be when they're used merely for effect. These words can improve coherence, but they can also be extra stuffing.

Roundabout Expressions

Although they can't always be deleted from a sentence, roundabout expressions always have more direct substitutes (Figure 11).

ROUNDABOUT EXPRESSIONS

Roundabout	Direct	Roundabout	Direct
arrive at a decision	decide	give consideration to	consider
at an early date	soon	inasmuch as	since
at the earliest possible moment	as soon as possible	in the course of	during
at the present time	now	in the event that	if
at your earliest convenience	as soon as you can	in the neighborhood of	about; approxi-mately
a check in the amount of	a check for	in view of the fact that	because; since
complying with your request	as requested	reference is made to	we refer to
due to the fact that	because	under separate cover	separately
during the time that	while	until such time as	until
enclosed please find	enclosed is	we are in a position to	we can
for the period of one month	for one month	we are in receipt of	we received

FIGURE 11—You can use these direct expressions as replacements for the roundabout expressions.

Repetitious Words and Phrases

If you've ever read a legal document, you've noticed how many pairs of words it contained that meant the same thing, such as *last will and testament, act and deed*, and *aid and abet*. The use of more words than are needed to express one's meaning is called *redundancy* (from the Latin *redundare*, meaning to overflow). Although the repetition of a word or phrase for the sake of emphasis is sometimes desirable, useless repetition should be avoided. For example, a widow must be a woman; therefore, in the expression *widow woman*, the word *woman* is unnecessary.

Wordy: *Important essentials* in our *decision-making process* are time and money.

Concise: Time and money are important to our decision.

Wordy: The situation will improve *ten months from now.*

Concise: The situation will improve in ten months.

Be alert in your writing not to repeat words or phrases unless the repetition is for emphasis, parallel balance, or smooth transition.

> *Wordy*: Julie liked *the new movie* and *she* recommended *the new movie* to her friends.
>
> *Concise:* Julie liked the new movie and recommended it to her friends.
>
> *Wordy*: It's useful to contrast these two *solutions*. The first *solution* is *complete*. The second *solution* is *incomplete*.
>
> *Concise:* It's useful to contrast these two solutions: the first is complete; the second is not.

Study the examples in Figure 12. Note that the italicized words are not necessary.

advance *forward*	*naval* warship	*first* introduction	same *identical*
advance planning	*now* in progress	five *in number*	sang a *vocal* solo
ascend *upward*	*old* legend	*foot* pedal	speaks with a *slow* drawl
audible *to the ear*	*old* antique	*free* gift	standing alone *by itself*
biography *of his life*	*one* and the same	*initial* start	suburbs *of the city*
blue *in color*	*other* alternative	I shall *first* begin	the *honest* truth
complete monopoly	*point* of destination	join *together*	the *two* twins
consensus *of opinion*	postpone *until later*	matinee *in the afternoon*	*true* fact
continue *on*	*present* incumbent	*mechanical* robot	visible *to the eye*
cross *over* the bridge	rectangular *in shape*	*mental* telepathy	warn *beforehand*
each and every one	revert *back*	*natural* instinct	widow *woman*

FIGURE 12—You may often omit the redundant words in these examples.

You could add many redundant expressions to the list in Figure 12. The important thing is to be aware of such pitfalls and to recognize how they weaken both written and spoken English.

Avoiding the Weak Passive

We all have a voice with which we speak. Our voices may be strong or weak, pleasant or harsh. Whatever the case, the qualities of our voices affect the messages we communicate.

Verbs too have voices, and those voices affect the messages they deliver. The voice of a verb may be active or passive. In a sentence with an active-voice verb, the subject is performing an action.

> John hit the ball.

On the other hand, in a sentence with a passive-voice verb, the subject is being acted upon.

> John was hit by the ball.

So, the subject is active in an active-voice sentence while the subject is passive in a passive-voice sentence. Look closely at the two examples and you'll see some differences. For instance, the passive verb is always at least two words, since passive voice is formed with a form of the verb *to be* and the past participle. In addition, if the actor or agent of the action is mentioned, it's added to the end of the sentence, generally in a *by* prepositional phrase. The passive voice makes for more wordy constructions. In addition, the use of the passive can be clumsy and awkward. Notice how cumbersome a famous song title becomes in the passive voice.

> My heart was left in San Francisco by me.

Doesn't quite convey the impression of the active voice, does it?

> I left my heart in San Francisco.

In general, the active voice is considered more versatile, direct, and vigorous than the passive.

> *Active*: My brother and I caught the trout.

> *Passive*: The trout was caught by my brother and me.

> *Active*: Jim will always cherish his first trip to France.

> *Passive*: His first trip to France will always be cherished by Jim.

> *Active*: I prepared the arguments against buying the new forming equipment.

> *Passive*: The arguments against buying the new forming equipment were prepared by me.

> *Active*: The Planning and Approval Committee revised the goals of the department.

> *Passive*: The goals of the department were revised by the Planning and Approval Committee.

Notice that voice isn't the same thing as tense. Some people mistakenly confuse passive voice with past tense. They're not the same. In fact, all verbs have both voice and tense. A passive verb can be in the present tense, just as an active verb can be in the past tense.

> A decision about a worker's promotion is usually made by a special committee. (present tense, passive voice)
>
> We made a decision about your promotion. (past tense, active voice)

In summary, the active voice is normally more interesting, direct, lively, and forceful than the passive. Your use of language will be bolder and more concise if you avoid unnecessary passive constructions.

Using the Passive Properly

If using the active voice creates a more lively writing style, does that mean you should never use the passive voice? Of course not. Sometimes you want to emphasize the receiver of the action. Making the receiver the subject of the sentence is an effective way of doing that.

> The bill was finally passed by Congress.
>
> The meeting was called to order by the president.

In other cases, who performed the action isn't significant; it's the action itself that's important.

> The ambulance was called.

Sometimes a writer or speaker won't want to commit to stating the actor of the action for some reason.

> Your lamp was broken.

In this case, the writer or speaker may fear the repercussions of saying

> I broke your lamp.

Also, writers do (occasionally) use the passive voice just to vary sentence structure.

The passive voice, therefore, has uses, but it also can be abused. It can give a false appearance of objectivity, and it can absolve a writer from having to support or explain a point.

> It has been proven that Product X is effective.

Doesn't that sound official, scientific? But think about it. How has this effectiveness been proven? And, most importantly, by whom? The writer probably doesn't want you to know the answer to those two questions. This writer may be hiding the facts behind the passive construction.

So, use the passive voice sparingly and for a good reason—not to cloud the truth or deceive. And remember, as a general rule, the active voice makes writing livelier and more energetic.

English in Action 6

Revise the following sentences so that the *active voice* replaces the *passive voice.*

1. All of us were surprised to hear the views that were expressed by him.

   ____

2. At each new performance of the jazz band, the music was enjoyed by Pat even more.

   ____

3. Several different techniques for grafting can be employed by the gardener.

   ____

4. Only one person had not been persuaded by the rhetoric.

   ____

5. These improvements for bus riders were provided in part by Congress through a new program that included two innovations: distribution of funds to localities and provision for annual increases to be made through the coming six years.

   ____

   ____

Check your answers with those on page 76.

Practice Exercise 6

Questions 1–8: Using the sentence beginnings suggested in parentheses, revise the following sentences on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Marilyn made several last-minute changes in the report in order to support her argument with the latest statistics. (Infinitive)
2. He rejected every attempt at compromise and stormed from the room in anger. (Present participle)
3. Cramer was thoughtful of her subordinates, and she never criticized their errors publicly. (Adjective)
4. Oil imports are always self-financing because the money paid for foreign oil comes back as deposits and investments. (Dependent adverbial clause)
5. Congress hopes to improve the lot of farmers by boosting price and income guarantees. (Prepositional phrase)
6. The glider swept noiselessly over the swaying treetops. (Adverb)
7. The senator was stung by mounting gossip about his private life, and he retired from office. (Past participle)
8. The mechanics can repair the paving equipment now that the new parts finally have arrived. (Absolute construction)

Questions 9–23: Underline each *redundant expression.* Some sentences contain no redundancies.

9. It was George's first introduction to the Board of Directors.
10. Events in the new stadium will be limited only to track and field.
11. Our marketing assistant is an authority on old antiques.
12. We're adding three additional names to the awards luncheon list.
13. Marian is continuing her survey of living conditions on the East Side.
14. Weather conditions forced the regional managers to postpone their trip to the home office until later.
15. They hope to return back to the field office within a week.
16. He is looking forward to his first vacation in three years.
17. I thought her statement was pure and undiluted impudence.
18. There's an excellent public library only a few blocks from our house.
19. We passed by the warehouse on our way to the new manufacturing plant.

(Continued)

Practice Exercise 6

20. The consensus of opinion was that Sarah had told the honest truth.

21. One necessary requirement for success in business is a command of the language.

22. Because of galactic dust, light that's visible to the eye can't reach Earth from the center of the Milky Way.

23. If you repeat your request again in a louder tone, perhaps the salesclerk will be able to hear you.

Questions 24–28: Indicate which of the following sentences are in the *active voice* and which are in the *passive voice.*

24. The economic analysis has been reviewed by me, and it's recommended that we go ahead with the project.

25. Inform your clients that we've completed the prototype model on schedule.

26. The latest novel by the renowned author was read by his devoted fans with great enthusiasm.

27. The accident on the interstate highway was seen by the thousands of commuters who use the road.

28. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the bride kissed the groom.

Check your answers with those on page 82.

NOTES

English in Action Answers

1

1. George Washington/was
2. Potomac River/is
3. George Washington/could have thrown
4. He/suffered
5. teeth/are displayed
6. Founding Father/was
7. Writer, publisher, inventor, statesman, agent/were
8. Benjamin Franklin/was

2

1. *Teaching young children* is a gerund phrase that is used as the subject of the verb *requires*.
2. Gerund phrase
3. Infinitive phrase
4. Participial phrase
5. Infinitive phrase
6. Participial phrase

3

1. Simple
2. Compound-complex
3. Compound
4. Complex
5. Complex
6. Simple
7. Compound
8. Compound-complex
9. Simple
10. Complex

4

Your sentences may vary slightly. Make sure each has a subject and a predicate and expresses a complete thought, using correct punctuation to connect all independent and dependent clauses.

The history of civilization in Canada isn't very long compared with other areas of the world that are heavily populated today. Archeologists haven't found any fossils any older than around 30,000 years old. That probably indicates there were no earlier forms of humans in Canada as there were in Africa, for instance. Of course, the weather wasn't very hospitable to people because the last ice age only ended several thousand years ago. Meanwhile, complex societies based on agriculture were developing in Mexico.

5

1. If we don’t leave immediately, we’ll be late for the play.
2. Until the work on the newest space shuttle has been completed, the United States space program won’t be resumed.
3. Provided you’re practicing yoga under careful supervision, it is an excellent means of keeping fit. (Notice that the word *it* in the adverbial clause has been changed to *yoga* to make clearer the meaning of the clause.)
4. If it isn’t raining, the rock group will perform in the park.
5. Because it contained questions we hadn’t studied, the examination was difficult.
6. Because we were anxious about passing, we had spent the afternoon preparing for the exam.
7. As we drove to the airport, we listened to the weather report.

6

1. His views surprised us all.
2. Pat enjoyed the music more at each new performance of the jazz band.
3. The gardener can employ several different techniques for grafting.
4. The rhetoric had persuaded all but one person.
5. Congress provided these improvements for bus riders in part through a new program that included two innovations: distribution of funds to localities and provision for annual increases for six years.

Practice Exercise Answers

1

	Simple Predicate	Simple Subject	Complete Subject	
1.	entered	Sam	Sam	
2.	contained	briefcase	Rose's lost briefcase	
3.	is	writing	Technical writing	
4.	make	pressures	Job pressures	
5.	are	packages	Company benefit packages	
6.	make	machines	Fax machines	
7.	are	trips	Long business trips	
8.	changed	automation	Office automation	
9.	dress	people	More people	
10.	restrict	employers	Many employers	
11.	adverb	verb	subject	
12.	subject	linking verb	subject complement	
13.	interrogative adjective	verb	subject	
14.	subject	action verb	direct object	
15.	helping verb	subject	main verb	
16.	subject	linking verb	subject complement	
17.	subject	action verb	indirect object	direct object
18.	subject	verb	object	object complement

2

1. that
2. who
3. who
4. whom
5. whoever
6. which

	Participle	Main Verb
7.	fastened	is tugging
8.	walking	
9.	hanging	
10.	broken	
11.		was broken
12.		will be painting
13.	written, spoken	
14.	freezing	should have worn
15.	retired	are working
16.	written	

17. having finished their dinner
18. Told of a possible flu epidemic
19. coming from the old house
20. hanging from your shirt
21. written in black ink on white paper
22. played by the stage band
23. Trembling with emotion
24. Racing
25. Collecting coins
26. digging in the garden
27. hooking the cars together
28. Exercising daily
29. to drive
30. to help
31. no infinitive
32. To be
33. no infinitive
34. to travel
35. to talk
36. no infinitive
37. To swim
38. to do

	Dependent Clause	Word Modified	Type of Clause
39.	while you were telephoning	arrived	adverb
40.	that Joe bought	newspaper	adjective
41.	when he raised his hands	became	adverb
42.	that bit her	squirrel	adjective
43.	when you leave	Take	adverb
44.	than the one I bought last week	efficiently	adverb
45.	so that they would pass the course	studied	adverb
46.	that the community should support with its patronage	restaurant	adjective
47.	who live in glass houses	People	adjective
48.	Because he failed to stop at the intersection	issued	adverb

49. that the defendant was innocent

50. What you have to do

51. why he wanted to leave the family farm and move to the big city

52. Whoever solves the difficult problem facing the family

53.	at the omelet	adverb
54.	by the door	adjective
55.	around the neighborhood after supper	adverb adverb
56.	over the river through the woods to grandmother's house	adverb adverb adverb
57.	to the church on time	adverb adverb
58.	with the hoe	adjective
59.	on the wall	adjective
60.	down the street	adverb
61.	down the drain	adverb

62. Restrictive
63. Nonrestrictive, set off with commas
64. Restrictive
65. Nonrestrictive, set off with commas
66. Nonrestrictive, set off with commas
67. Restrictive
68. Restrictive
69. Restrictive
70. Restrictive

3

1. The girls had left early, but they arrived home too late for dinner.
2. The sentences aren't related.
3. The sentences aren't related.
4. Kathleen had cut out a new pair of slacks, and Marianne was working on the jacket.
5. The sentences aren't related.
6. that will improve his condition (adjective)
7. which is on the roof of the barn (adjective)
8. after I received your report (adverb)
9. Unless the directions are followed carefully (adverb)
10. whose car is blocking the driveway (adjective)
11. where the road forks (adverb)
12. before you make up your mind (adverb)
13. who was the eighth president of the United States (adjective)
14. that is on your desk (adjective)
15. that you ordered for the kitchen wall (adjective)
16. Complex
17. Simple
18. Complex
19. Complex
20. Compound
21. Simple
22. Compound

4

1. to run cross country
2. who has first-rate garden tools
3. to succeed
4. and two days' worth of half-eaten lunch
5. keenly intelligent
6. without dishonor
7. In late March, in April, and in May
8. Not parallel
9. Fragment
10. Run-on
11. Not parallel
12. Run-on
13. Fragment
14. Dangling participle
15. Not parallel
16. Run-on
17. Fragment

5

1. Fencing demands a keen eye, quick reflexes, and agility. (The comma after *reflexes* may be omitted.)
2. Originally a training method for swordsmanship and dueling, fencing today is a harmless sport—unless, of course, you plan to replace Zorro.
3. Every precaution, however, is taken to prevent accidental injury.
4. Do you know, for instance, that the weapons have dulled edges and blunted tips capped with buttons?
5. Points are scored by merely touching the opponent.
6. The rent, by the way, is due on the first of the month.
7. As soon as they arrived, they jumped in the water.
8. For breakfast, I'll have cereal, toast, orange juice, and coffee. (The comma after *orange juice* may be omitted.)
9. Today we went to the store, to the post office, and to the bank. (The comma after *post office* may be omitted.)
10. Dawson, the Chicago outfielder, was, in my opinion, the real star of the game. (The commas before and after *in my opinion* may be omitted.)
11. According to Ruskin, "Fine art is that in which the hand, the head, and the heart of man go together." (The comma after *head* may be omitted.)
12. Irving, who lived from 1783 to 1859, was the first major literary figure of the new nation.
13. When Frances returns from her vacation in California, I hope to have a vacation myself.
14. Commas, like exclamation marks, are overused by some writers, don't you think?
15. I like to see the train, which was built decades ago, speed along the track.
16. I'll meet you at Spring Garden Street; don't be late. (Or, you might use a dash instead of a semicolon.)
17. She listed the planets as follows: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto,
18. "I love that old blues song," said Tim.
19. The punctuation of the sentence is correct.
20. I've seen Andy's project—where's yours? (Or, you might use a semicolon instead of a dash.)
21. ;
22. ,
23. ;
24. ;
25. ,
26. ,
27. ,
28. ;
29. ;
30. ;

6

Your constructions should be similar to these.

1. To support her argument with the latest statistics, Marilyn made several last-minute changes in the report.
2. Rejecting every attempt at compromise, he stormed from the room in anger.
3. Thoughtful of her subordinates, Cramer never criticized their errors publicly.
4. Because the money paid for foreign oil comes back to the United States as deposits and investments, oil imports are always self-financing.
5. By boosting price and income guarantees, Congress hopes to improve the lot of farmers.
6. Noiselessly, the glider swept over the swaying treetops.
7. Stung by mounting gossip about his private life, the senator retired from office.
8. The new parts finally having arrived, the mechanics can repair the paving equipment.
9. first introduction
10. limited only
11. old antiques
12. adding . . . additional
13. (none)
14. postpone . . . until later
15. return back
16. (none)
17. pure . . . undiluted
18. (none)
19. passed by
20. consensus of opinion, honest truth
21. necessary requirement
22. visible to the eye
23. repeat . . . again
24. Passive
25. Active
26. Passive
27. Passive
28. Active

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